

POEMS

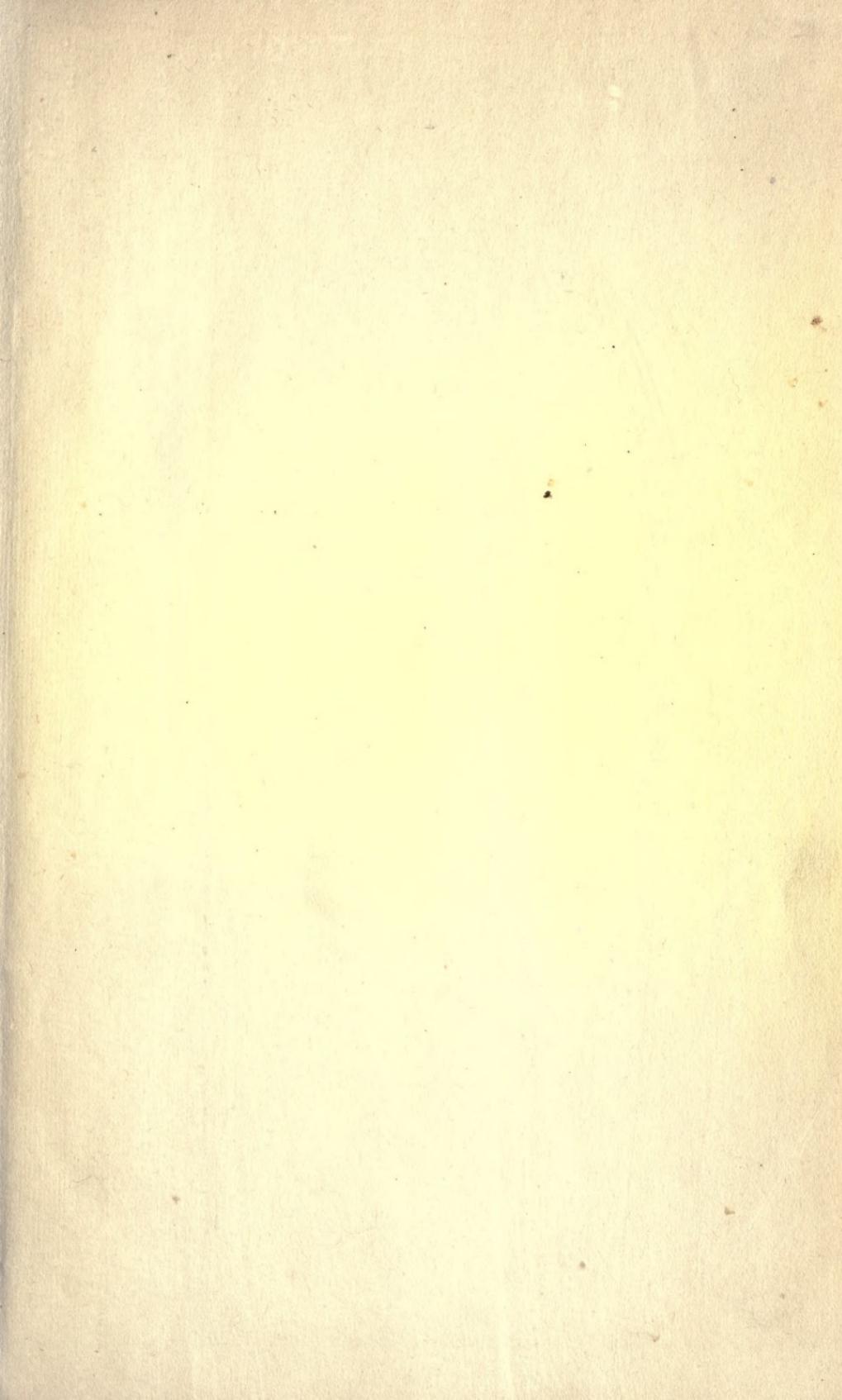
FREDERICK GEORGE SCOTT

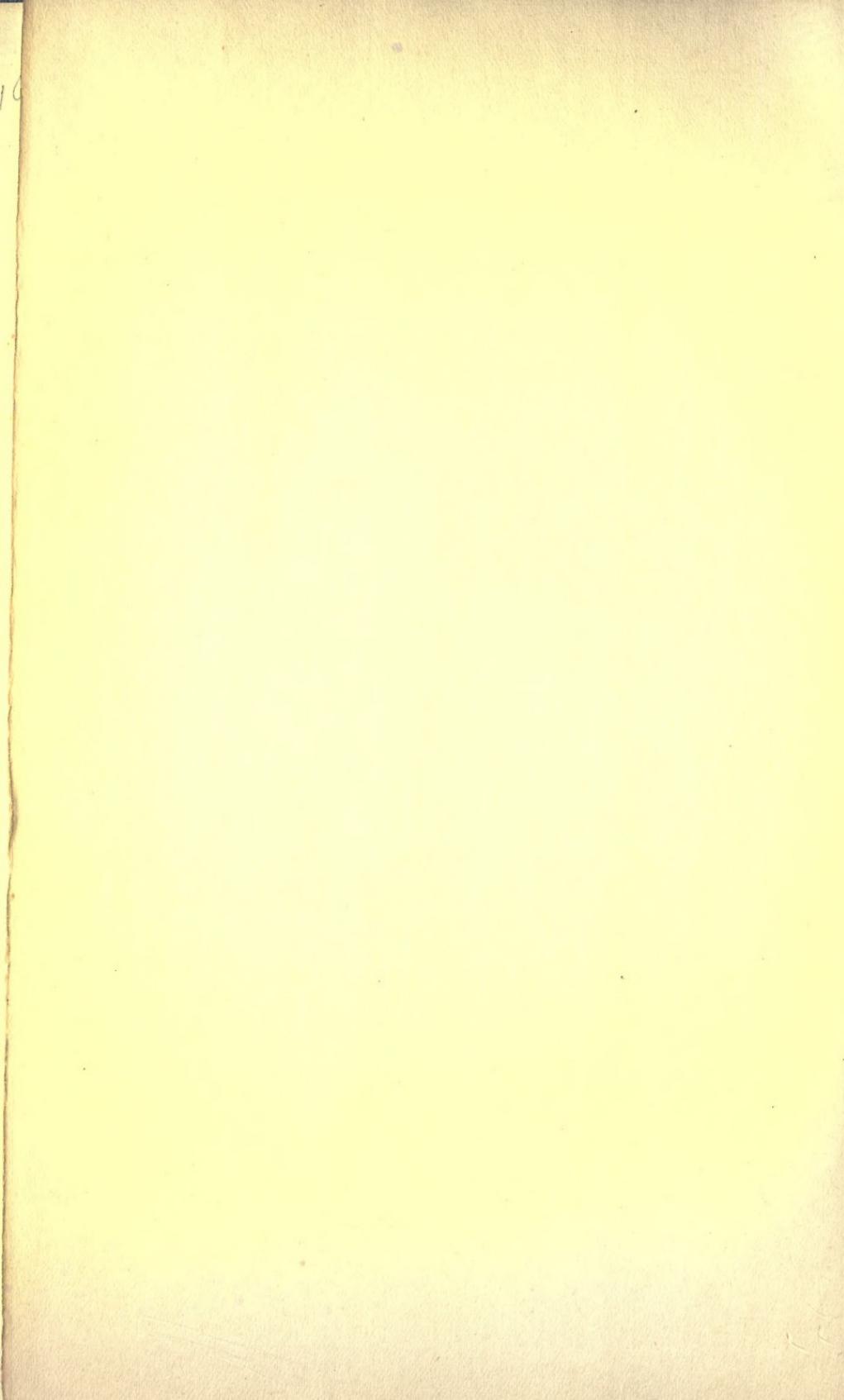
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BY

FREDERICK GEORGE SCOTT

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TO MY WIFE

SWEET Lady, queen-star of my life and thought,
Whose honour, heart and name are one with mine,
Who dost above life's troubled currents shine
With such clear beam as oftentimes hath brought
The storm-tossed spirit into harbours wrought
By love and peace on life's rough margin-line ;
I wish no wish which is not wholly thine,
I hope no hope but what thyself hast sought.
Thou losest not, my Lady, in the wife,
The golden love-light of our earlier days ;
Time dims it not, it mounteth like the sun,
Till earth and sky are radiant. Sweet, my life
Lies at thy feet, and all life's gifts and praise,
Yet are they nought to what thy knight hath won.

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THE TEMPLE OF THE AGES

THESE mountains sleep, white winter's mantle round them,
The thunder's voice no longer breaks their rest ;
From bluest heights the sun beholds with rapture
The noble pose of each gigantic crest.

The generations of the clouds have vanished
Which lingered idly here through autumn days ;
The leaves have gone, the voices of the tempest
No longer roll to heaven their hymn of praise.

Deep hid in snow, the streams with muffled murmurs
Pour down dark caverns to the infinite sea ;
This awful peace has vexed their restless childhood ;
They hurry from its dread solemnity.

Even the climbing woods are mute and spell-bound,
And, halting midway on the steep ascent,
The patient spruces hold their breath for wonder,
Nor shake the snow with which their boughs are bent.

Now as the sun goes down with all his shining,
Huge shadows creep among these mighty walls,
And on the haunting ghosts of by-gone ages
The dreamy splendour of the starlight falls.

THE TEMPLE OF THE AGES

Not Nineveh, not Babylon nor Egypt,
In all their treasures 'neath the hungry sand,
Can show a sight so awful and majestic
As this waste temple in this newer land.

The king that reared these mighty courts was Chaos,
His servants, fire and elemental war ;
The Titan hands of Earthquake and of Ocean
These granite slabs and pillars laid in store.

And, lauding here the vast and living Father,
The ages one by one have knelt and prayed,
Until the ghostly echoes of their worship
Come back and make man's puny heart afraid.

THE UNNAMED LAKE

It sleeps among the thousand hills
Where no man ever trod,
And only nature's music fills
The silences of God.

Great mountains tower above its shore,
Green rushes fringe its brim,
And o'er its breast for evermore
The wanton breezes skim.

Dark clouds that intercept the sun
Go there in Spring to weep,
And there, when Autumn days are done,
White mists lie down to sleep.

Sunrise and sunset crown with gold
The peaks of ageless stone,
Where winds have thundered from of old
And storms have set their throne.

No echoes of the world afar
Disturb it night or day,
But sun and shadow, moon and star
Pass and repass for aye.

'Twas in the grey of early dawn,
When first the lake we spied,
And fragments of a cloud were drawn
Half down the mountain side.

THE UNNAMED LAKE

Along the shore a heron flew,
And from a speck on high,
That hovered in the deepening blue,
We heard the fish-hawk's cry.

Among the cloud-capt solitudes,
No sound the silence broke,
Save when, in whispers down the woods,
The guardian mountains spoke.

Through tangled brush and dewy brake,
Returning whence we came,
We passed in silence, and the lake
We left without a name.

THE BURDEN OF TIME

BEFORE the seas and mountains were brought forth,
I reigned. I hung the universe in space,
I capped earth's poles with ice to South and
North,
And set the moving tides their bounds and
place.

I smoothed the granite mountains with my hand,
My fingers gave the continents their form ;
I rent the heavens and loosed upon the land
The fury of the whirlwind and the storm.

I stretched the dark sea like a nether sky
Fronting the stars between the ice-clad zones ;
I gave the deep his thunder ; the Most High
Knows well the voice that shakes His mountain
thrones.

I trod the ocean caverns black as night,
And silent as the bounds of outer space,
And where great peaks rose darkly towards the
light
I planted life to root and grow apace.

Then through a stillness deeper than the grave's,
The coral spires rose slowly one by one,
Until the white shafts pierced the upper waves
And shone like silver in the tropic sun.

I ploughed with glaciers down the mountain glen,
And graved the iron shore with stream and tide ;
I gave the bird her nest, the lion his den,
The snake long jungle-grass wherein to hide.

In lonely gorge and over hill and plain,
I sowed the giant forests of the world ;
The great earth like a human heart in pain
Has quivered with the meteors I have hurled.

I plunged whole continents beneath the deep,
And left them sepulchred a million years ;
I called, and lo, the drowned lands rose from sleep,
Sundering the waters of the hemispheres.

I am the lord and arbiter of man—
I hold and crush between my finger-tips
Wild hordes that drive the desert caravan,
Great nations that go down to sea in ships.

In sovereign scorn I tread the races down,
As each its puny destiny fulfils,
On plain and island, or where huge cliffs frown,
Wrapt in the deep thought of the ancient hills.

The wild sea searches vainly round the land
For those proud fleets my arm has swept away ;
Vainly the wind along the desert sand
Calls the great names of kings who once held
sway.

Yea, Nineveh and Babylon the great
Are fallen—like ripe ears at harvest-tide ;
I set my heel upon their pomp and state,
The people's serfdom and the monarch's pride.

One doom waits all—art, speech, law, gods, and men,
Forests and mountains, stars and shining sun,—
The hand that made them shall unmake again,
I curse them and they wither one by one.

Waste altars, tombs, dead cities where men trod,
Shall roll through space upon the darkened globe,
Till I myself be overthrown, and God
Cast off creation like an outworn robe.

IN THE WINTER WOODS

WINTER forests mutely standing
 Naked on your bed of snow,
Wide your knotted arms expanding
 To the biting winds that blow,
Nought ye heed of storm or stress,
Stubborn, silent, passionless.

Buried is each woodland treasure,
 Gone the leaves and mossy rills,
Gone the birds that filled with pleasure
 All the valleys and the hills ;
Ye alone of all that host
Stand like soldiers at your post.

Grand old trees, the words ye mutter,
 Nodding in the frosty wind,
Wake some thoughts I cannot utter,
 But which haunt the heart and mind,
With a meaning, strange and deep,
As of visions seen in sleep.

Something in my inmost thinking
 Tells me I am one with you,
For a subtle bond is linking
 Nature's offspring through and through,
And your spirit like a flood
Stirs the pulses of my blood.

While I linger here and listen
To the creaking boughs above,
Hung with icicles that glisten
As if kindling into love,
Human heart and soul unite
With your majesty and might.

Horizontal, rich with glory,
Through the boughs the red sun's rays
Clothe you as some grand life-story
Robes an aged man with praise,
When, before his setting sun,
Men recount what he has done.

But the light is swiftly fading,
And the wind is icy cold,
And a mist the moon is shading,
Pallid in the western gold ;
In the night-winds still ye nod,
Sentinels of Nature's God.

Now with laggard steps returning
To the world from whence I came,
Leave I all the great West burning
With the day that died in flame,
And the stars, with silver ray,
Light me on my homeward way.

AMONG THE SPRUCES

'Tis sweet, O God, to steal away,
 Before the morning sun is high,
Upon some frosty winter's day,
 When not a cloud is on the sky,
And all the world is white below,
 Knee-deep with freshly-fallen snow,—

To steal into the silent woods
 Before the trees are quite awake,
And watch them in their snowy hoods
 A rough-and-ready toilet make,
When in the little breezes creep
 And rouse them gently from their sleep.

'Tis sweet, O God, to kneel among
 The snow-bent trees, and lift the mind
Above the boughs where birds have sung,
 Above the pathways of the wind,
Into the very heart of space,—
 To where the angels see Thy face.

For while my spirit mounts in prayer,
 So keen becomes its mystic sight,
That through the sunshine in the air
 I see a new and heavenly light,
And all the bowed woods seem to be
 Acknowledging the Trinity.

THE RIVER

WHY hurry, little river,
Why hurry to the sea ?
 There is nothing there to do
 But to sink into the blue
 And all forgotten be.
There is nothing on that shore
 But the tides for evermore,
 And the faint and far-off line
 Where the winds across the brine
 For ever, ever roam
 And never find a home.

Why hurry, little river,
 From the mountains and the mead,
 Where the graceful elms are sleeping
 And the quiet cattle feed ?
The loving shadows cool
 The deep and restful pool ;
 And every tribute stream
 Brings its own sweet woodland dream
 Of the mighty woods that sleep
 Where the sighs of earth are deep,
 And the silent skies look down
 On the savage mountain's frown.

Oh, linger, little river,
 Your banks are all so fair,

THE RIVER

Each morning is a hymn of praise,
 Each evening is a prayer.
All day the sunbeams glitter
 On your shallows and your bars,
And at night the dear God stills you
 With the music of the stars.

THE STORM

O GRIP the earth, ye forest trees,
Grip well the earth to-night,
The Storm-God rides across the seas
To greet the morning light.

All clouds that wander through the skies
Are tangled in his net,
The frightened stars have shut their eyes,
The breakers fume and fret.

The birds that cheer the woods all day
Now tremble in their nests,
The giant branches round them sway,
The wild wind never rests.

The squirrel and the cunning fox
Have hurried to their holes,
Far off, like distant earthquake shocks,
The muffled thunder rolls.

In scores of hidden woodland dells,
Where no rough winds can harm,
The timid wild-flowers toss their bells
In reasonless alarm.

Only the mountains rear their forms,
Silent and grim and bold ;
To them the voices of the storms
Are as a tale re-told.

THE STORM

They saw the stars in heaven hung,
They heard the great Sea's birth,
They know the ancient pain that wrung
The entrails of the Earth.

Sprung from great Nature's royal lines,
They share her deep repose,—
Their rugged shoulders robed in pines,
Their foreheads crowned with snows.

But now there comes a lightning flash,
And now on hill and plain
The charging clouds in fury dash,
And blind the world with rain.

NATURE'S RECOMPENSE

WITH barren heart and weary mind,
I wander from the haunts of men,
And strive in solitude to find
The careless joys of youth again.

I seek the long-loved woodland brook,
I watch the clouds when day is done,
I climb the mountain top and look,
All-eager, at the rising sun.

I plunge into the forest glade,
Untrodden yet by human feet,
And, loitering through the light and shade,
I hear the birds their songs repeat.

But all in vain, they will not come—
Those voices that I knew of old ;
Great Nature's lips to me are dumb,
Her heart to me is dead and cold.

In vain I lie upon her breast
And ask her for the dreams I seek,
She takes no pity on my quest,
I cannot force her lips to speak.

Then, haply, in a calm despair
I give up seeking, and I lie,
All-thoughtless, in the woodland air
And 'neath the leaf-bespangled sky.

And then it comes, the voice of old,
Which soothes the realms of death and birth,
The message through the ages told,
The cradle song of Mother Earth.

And as it thrills each languid sense
And lifts me from the world apart,
Great Nature makes full recompense
For her past coldness to my heart.

‘ NATURA VICTRIX ’

ON the crag I sat in wonder,
Stars above me, forests under ;
Through the valleys came and went
Tempest forces never spent,
And the gorge sent up the thunder
Of the stream within it pent.

Round me with majestic bearing
Stood the giant mountains, wearing
Helmets of eternal snows,
Cleft by nature’s labour throes—
Monster faces mutely staring
Upward into God’s repose.

At my feet in desolation
Swayed the pines, a shadowy nation,
Round the wood-lake deep and dread,
Round the river glacier-fed,
Where a ghostly undulation
Shakes its subterranean bed.

And I cried, ‘ O wildernesses !
Mountains ! which the wind caresses,
In a savage love sublime,
Through the bounds of space and time,
All your moods and deep distresses
Roll around me like a chime.

' Lo, I hear the mighty chorus
 Of the elements that bore us
 Down the course of nature's stream,
 Onward in a haunted dream
 Towards the darkness, where before us
 Time and death forgotten seem.

' Now behold the links of lightning
 Round the neck of storm-god tightening,
 Madden him with rage and shame
 Till he smites the earth with flame,
 In the darkening and the brightening
 Of the clouds on which he came.

' Nature ! at whose will are driven
 Tides of ocean, winds of heaven,
 Thou who rulest near and far
 Forces grappling sun and star,
 Is to thee the knowledge given
 Whence these came and what they are ?

' Is thy calm the calm of knowing
 Whence the force is, whither going ?
 Is it but the blank despair
 Of the wrecked, who does not care,
 Out at sea, what wind is blowing
 To the death that waits him there ?

' Mother Nature, stern aggressor,
 Of thy child the mind-possessor,
 Thou art in us like a flood,
 Welling through our thought and blood—
 Force evolving great from lesser,
 As the blossom from the bud.

‘ Yea, I love thy fixed, enduring
Times and seasons, life procuring
From abysmal heart of thine ;
And my spirit would resign
All its dreams and hopes alluring
With thy spirit to combine.

‘ Would that I, amid the splendour
Of the thunder-blasts, could render
Back the dismal dole of birth,
Fusing soul-clouds in the girth
Of thy rock breasts, or the tender
Green of everlasting earth.

‘ Haply, when the scud was flying
And the lurid daylight dying
Through the rain-smoke on the sea,
Thoughtless, painless, one with thee,
I, in perfect bondage lying,
Should for ever thus be free.

‘ Mighty spirits, who have striven
Up life’s ladder-rounds to heaven,
Or ye freighted ones who fell
On the poppy slopes of hell,
When the soul was led or driven,
Knew ye not who wrought the spell ?

‘ Understood not each his brother
From the features of our mother
Stamped on every human face ?
Did not earth, man’s dwelling-place,
Draw you to her as no other,
With a stronger bond than grace ?

'NATURA VICTRIX'

' Tempest hands the forests rending,
 Placid stars the night attending,
 Mountains, storm-clouds, land and sea,
 Nature!—make me one with thee;
 From my soul its pinions rending,
 Chain me to thy liberty.

' Hark! the foot of death is nearing,
 And my spirit aches with fearing,
 Hear me, mother, hear my cry,
 Merge me in the harmony
 Of thy voice which stars are hearing,
 Wonder-stricken in the sky.

' Mother, will no sorrow move thee?
 Does the silence heartless prove thee?
 Thou who from the rocks and rain
 Mad'st this soul, take back again
 What thy fingers wrought to love thee
 Through the furnace of its pain.

' Giant boulders, roll beside me,
 Tangled ferns, bow down and hide me,
 Hide me from the face of death;
 Or, great Nature, on thy breath
 Send some mighty words to guide me,
 Till the demon vanisheth.'

Then as sweet as organ playing,
 Came a voice, my fears allaying;
 From the mountains and the sea,
 'Wouldst thou, soul, be one with me,
 In thy might the slayer slaying?
 Wrestle not with what must be.'

Heart and spirit in devotion,
Vibrant with divine emotion,
 Bowed before that mighty sound,
 And amid the dark around
Quaffed the strength of land and ocean
 In a sacrament profound.

Then I burst my bonds asunder,
And my voice rose in the thunder
 With a full and powerful breath,
 Strong for what great nature saith,
And I bade the stars in wonder
 See me slay the slayer—death.

MILTON

I

O MIGHTY Spirit, who, from out the deep
And storehouse of God's purposes, awhile
Didst breathe our air, awhile wast imprisoned here,
In these dull chains of flesh and circumstance,
We hear at times in dreams, when all is dark,
Thy pinions nearing earth, and once again,
From mingling with the mighty elements
That throng the awful realms where God's huge
thoughts

Grow to star systems and the nebulæ
Are but His dim imagining of worlds,
Thy form revisits earth and gives man cheer
And spurs his spirit on to chafe and fret
And bound towards liberty in fearful leaps
Of insurrection. Yea, when palling night
Of human littleness and puny aims
Broods thick and starless over us, and when
With bestial opulence men feast and gorge
Upon the swine husks in the trough of life,
Thy steadfast spirit wakes some son of man,
And lo, before his wondering eyes there burns
The awful vision of the infinite ;
And in his ears, from ocean, earth and sky,
There rings a constant music and a psalm
Of mighty harmonies which drowns the voice
Of human arrogance and slavish fear.

II

O glorious Master, as I sing, there dawns
Upon my soul, in dim, auroral light,

The vision of thy childhood, and I see
Thy face so beautiful with those large eyes
Filled with the wonder waking on the world
Hath brought thee, and with promise strange,
When darkness falls, of sights invisible,—
The Eternal City and the abysmal gulf
And thundering legions of the hosts on high.
No sorrow clouds thee yet. The hedgerows fair
Sparkle with dew, birds sing their songs to thee
In pleasant country lanes. Each day when dawn
Peers on thy sleep through bowery eglantine,
And scent of honeysuckle fills the air,
Thy dreams are fed with beauty ; and when day
Brings forth thy books, then waking dreams are
sweet
Until the dewy eve with gentle step
Creeps up the village street in livery
Of sober grey, and in the neighbouring folds
The patient sheep by watchful shepherds' care
Are warmly housed, and nightingales begin
Among the trees to make sweet minstrelsy.
When Hesperus comes, and in the glowing west
The crescent moon follows the golden sun,
Then most thine unstained spirit feels the sense
Of the illimitable love of God,
Who midst the shouts of Angels hung the stars
Upon earth's canopy, and built on fire
The firm foundation pillars of the world.
Nor is God less to thee that day by day
The Gods and Heroes of the olden world
Return, and people for thee in thy walks
The hills and valleys and the singing streams.
Beauty transcending truth doth lift thy mind
To highest truth where all things blend in one.
And, ever mingling with the joys of youth,

There comes that deeper joy of soul which springs
From lust of noble deeds and high resolve
To reach the topmost round of human fame
And make the ages thine through some great song
Whose strains will perish only with the world.
The vision grows before thee of the arched
And fretted vault and blazoned window panes
Of England's Minster, where great England guards
Her noblest dead, and where the living past,
Nursed in the nation's throbbing heart, waits on
And watches for the final hour, God's doom
Upon man's deeds. A whisper in thy soul
Tells thee thou too art kindred with the dead
Whom Death found deathless, and whom Time hath
crowned
With glory deepening as the years go by.
Now comes the great resolve, the steadfast choice,
The barter of the present for the gain
Of some far future, which, like birth of dawn,
Gilds all the wide horizon of thy life.

III

So, towards the chosen goal thy youth speeds on,
The fair unfolding flower of purity
Bestrewing thy path, and avenues of fame
Thrown wide to thee, whose vast capacious mind
Goes searching through the chambers of the dead
For some high theme to sing in golden song.
And ever beauty lures thee, and the dreams
Of beauty not of Earth. Austere and cold
Thou shunn'st the paint and tinsel of the world.
The fire of prisoned passion in thy heart
Can find no vent. No mistress fair enough
For thine embrace breathes in the living world,
Until, by tortuous ways and anguished hours

And grievous battling with the realms of fact,
Thou find'st man's fairest mistress—Liberty ;
And catching at her skirts and wooing her,
High consecration crowns thee, and thy days
Are given in homage to the Queen of Queens,
The peerless one, against whose throne the sea
Beats furiously and hideous mist conceals,
And men wage war on, mocking her and thee.
But thou, unflinching, dost through storm and hate
With faith unshaken face the maddened world,
And hurl defiance at it like a god
Dashing to atoms some rebellious star
That in the myriad clusters of the night
Provokes his fury.

In those silent years—

Silent for thee though noisy with the din
Of babbling tongues—thy spirit bends itself
Into the common fray, and common men
Throng round thee, knowing thee not, and counting
thee
A pedant babbling with the vulgar crowd.
But 'neath the iron yoke that bows thy neck
Self-immolation to the cause of man
Makes drudgery noble ; and in thy vast soul
The phantom forms of evil, which thy pen
Joins battle with, begin to move and breathe
And grow a world around thee, and, behold,
The wondrous purpose of thy fixed resolve
Takes shape, till bonds of actual are burst,
And thy soul rising up in majesty
Stands wonder-stricken viewing the sublime.

IV

Now darkness falls and night of hideous ruin,
And desolating tides of chance and fate

Bestrew the shore with wrecks. Thou art alone,
Once more alone, and more alone art thou,
Blind, weak and friendless, yet unconquerable.
But lo, the closing of the world to thee,
The shutting of life's windows on the sun,
Uncloses vaster worlds of human thought ;
And Liberty, thy mistress, takes thy hand
And leads thee fearless down the grim abyss
Where rebel angels hold their council dark,
Like thee, though overthrown, defiant still.
Thou hearest in their parliament the voice
Of one who stoops not at the feet of power
But courts damnation in magnificence
Of uttermost rebellion, and thy heart
Yearns towards the fallen fiend in sympathy ;
For thou art fallen and unconquered too.
From out the deep, thy soaring spirit cleaves
The upper air and mounts to highest heaven,
And sees the beauty of the Father's face,
And sights that blinding Death alone reveals.
Then round the singing spheres thy wingéd thoughts
Bear thee, thou skirt'st the utmost void.
Time, space, the giant march of human things,
Philosophies and those voluptuous gods
That hold in fee the sunshine of the earth,
Her streams and mountains and the sounding sea
That gnaws for ever at her coasts, all these
Thy soul, unfettered, sees with sight divine,
E'en while thou sitt'st beside thy cottage door
Crippled and blind, the white hairs on thy brow,
The kind sun warming thee, and humming bees
Making soft melody that dies away
In that great utterance rolling from thy lips
Of hidden things, beyond the power of man
To grasp, unaided by thy glorious soul,—

Those things which she, the pale girl at thy side,
Uncomprehending, duteous, noteth down.

V

Now fade the battlements of time, and Death,
In form of eagle, winged for loftiest flight,
Bears thy great soul triumphant to its throne
Among the stars, where Paradise regained
Rolls on in flowery meadows at thy feet ;
And He whose face thou darkly saw'st before
Beyond all love is lovable, and thou
Know'st now the secret providence of God
And the sure concord of the Eternal's ways.
Lave now thy feet in that clear stream of life
That issues from the throne, and raise thy voice
In the eternal harmonies which men
And rebel angels cannot discord make.
Now greet thee Michael, and the Heavenly Host,
Whom erstwhile thou didst sing in deathless song.
And those whom once thou scorned'st on the earth,
And who scorned thee in adverse ways of thought,
Thou see'st all white in God's high favour too.
For on God's hill the paths of duty wind
By devious courses to the sunlit top.
And lo, the riddle of the Universe,
The brightness and the darkness of the world,
The greatness and the meanness of the soul,
All, all are plain to thee, for all are solved
In that vast central heart whose being is Love.

VI

O Mighty Spirit, bend from out the Heavens ;
Thou wast the greatest, noblest of our race ;
The spirit of the Vikings wrought in thee ;
The spirit of all warriors fired thy veins ;

The cries of all our poets rang through thee ;
The glories of all kingship crowned thee king ;
Bend down to us, and on the ancient race
Which gave thee birth, whose speech rolls round the
world,
Pour down thy gift of song, and rear us men
With courage noble in the stress of things
As thine was, men who cringe not, court no gain,
Who love but truth and follow liberty,
And whose exalted vision and vast mind
O'ertop the narrowing walls of life and scan
The glorious regions of unclouded light,
Where God reigns and the angels are at peace.

MY LATTICE

My lattice looks upon the North,
The winds are cool that enter ;
At night I see the stars come forth,
Arcturus in the centre.

The curtain down my casement drawn
Is dewy mist, which lingers
Until my maid, the rosy dawn,
Uplifts it with her fingers.

The sparrows are my matin-bell,
Each day my heart rejoices,
When, from the trellis where they dwell,
They call me with their voices.

Then, as I dream with half-shut eye,
Without a sound or motion,
To me that little square of sky
Becomes a boundless ocean.

And straight my soul unfurls its sails
That blue sky-sea to sever,
My fancies are the noiseless gales
That waft it on for ever.

I sail into the depths of space
And leave the clouds behind me,
I pass the old moon's hiding-place,
The sun's rays cannot find me.

MY LATTICE

I sail beyond the solar light,
 Beyond the constellations,
Across the voids where loom in sight
 New systems and creations.

I pass great worlds of silent stone,
 Whence light and life have vanished,
Which wander on to tracts unknown,
 In lonely exile banished.

I meet with spheres of fiery mist
 Which warm me as I enter,
Where—ruby, gold and amethyst—
 The rainbow lights concentre.

And on I sail into the vast,
 New wonders aye discerning,
Until my mind is lost at last,
 And, suddenly returning,

I feel the wind which, cool as dew,
 Upon my face is falling,
And see again my patch of blue
 And hear the sparrows calling.

SAMSON

PLUNGED in night, I sit alone
Eyeless on this dungeon stone,
Naked, shaggy and unkempt,
Dreaming dreams no soul hath dreamt.

Rats and vermin round my feet
Play unharmed, companions sweet ;
Spiders weave me overhead
Silken curtains for my bed.

Day by day the mould I smell
Of this fungus-blistered cell ;
Nightly in my haunted sleep
O'er my face the lizards creep.

Gyves of iron scrape and burn
Wrists and ankles when I turn,
And my collared neck is raw
With the teeth of brass that gnaw.

God of Israel, canst Thou see
All my fierce captivity ?
Do Thy sinews feel my pains ?
Hearest Thou the clanking chains ?

Thou who madest me so fair,
Strong and buoyant as the air,
Tall and noble as a tree,
With the passions of the sea,

SAMSON

Swift as horse upon my feet,
Fierce as lion in my heat,
Rending, like a wisp of hay,
All that dared withstand my way,

Canst Thou see me through the gloom
Of this subterranean tomb,—
Blinded tiger in his den,
Once the lord and prince of men ?

Clay was I ; the potter Thou
With Thy thumb-nail smooth'dst my brow,
Roll'dst the spittle-moistened sands
Into limbs between Thy hands.

Thou didst pour into my blood
Fury of the fire and flood,
And upon the boundless skies
Thou didst first unclose my eyes.

And my breath of life was flame,
God-like from the source it came,
Whirling round like furious wind,
Thoughts upgathered in the mind.

Strong Thou mad'st me, till at length
All my weakness was my strength ;
Tortured am I, blind and wrecked,
For a faulty architect.

From the woman at my side,
Was I woman-like to hide
What she asked me, as if fear
Could my iron heart come near ?

Nay, I scorned and scorn again
Cowards who their tongues restrain ;
Cared I no more for Thy laws
Than a wind of scattered straws.

When the earth quaked at my name
And my blood was all aflame,
Who was I to lie, and cheat
Her who clung about my feet ?

From Thy open nostrils blow
Wind and tempest, rain and snow ;
Dost Thou curse them on their course,
For the fury of their force ?

Tortured am I, wracked and bowed,
But the soul within is proud ;
Dungeon fetters cannot still
Forces of the tameless will.

Israel's God, come down and see
All my fierce captivity ;
Let Thy sinews feel my pains,
With Thy fingers lift my chains.

Then, with thunder loud and wild,
Comfort Thou Thy rebel child,
And with lightning split in twain
Loveless heart and sightless brain.

Give me splendour in my death—
Not this sickening dungeon breath,
Creeping down my blood like slime,
Till it wastes me in my prime.

SAMSON

Give me back for one blind hour,
Half my former rage and power,
And some giant crisis send,
Meet to prove a hero's end.

Then, O God, Thy mercy show—
Crush him in the overthrow
At whose life they scorn and point,
By its greatness out of joint.

DION

A POEM

Argument

Dion of Syracuse (408-353 B.C.), philosopher, was a near relative, through his wife Arete, of the tyrant Dionysius the Second, by whom he was banished. He took up his residence at Athens, but on hearing that the tyrant had seized his son and given Arete in marriage to another, with a small and faithful force he returned to Syracuse, captured the place, and drove Dionysius into Ortygia, a fortress within the city walls. As soon as their oppression was relieved, the suspicious Syracusans began to fear the power of Dion, although he had nobly refused to make concessions to Dionysius when urged thereto by the passionate appeals of Arete and her son, held captive in Ortygia. On hearing of a plot formed against him among the citizens, by Heracleides, without taking revenge on the thankless city, Dion withdrew to Leontini, but only to be speedily recalled to rescue the people a second time from the ravages of Dionysius, who had charged out upon the town as soon as Dion had withdrawn. Again Dion returned to Syracuse, and this time succeeded in routing the tyrant from his stronghold and restoring peace. With a magnanimity equal to his valour, he pardoned Heracleides and his *confrères*. On breaking into the deserted fortress at the head of his troops, Dion, after years of separation, found his wife Arete. Dion naturally succeeded to the throne of the deposed monarch, but his reforms and the severity of his manners and rule rendered him unpopular with his fickle fellow-townsmen, and plots were formed for his assassination. He scorned to take precautions against attack, and so fell a victim to his

valour. He was surrounded, on the day of the festival of the Koreia, in his apartment in the palace, by a band of youths of distinguished muscular strength, who endeavoured to throw and strangle him. But the old warrior proving too strong for them, they were obliged to send out one of their number through a back door to procure a sword. With this Dion, a man in many ways too great for his age and circumstances, was despatched.

PRAY youths, what urgent business claims our ear
On this high feast when all keep holiday ?

Already do the gay-decked barges move
Across the harbour to the sacred grove,
And shouts and music reach us even here,
Where through the balustrades the dancing sea
Marbles this chamber with reflected lights.

What ! Is it treason ? Ye have come to slay ?
I read your purpose right. The palace guards
Have been secured, and all retreat cut off,
And I am at your mercy. It is well.

So often have I met death face to face,
His eyes now wear the welcome of a friend's.
Is it for hate of Dion, or for gold,

Ye come to stain your honour with my blood ?
And think ye I shall kneel and fawn on you,
And cry for mercy with a woman's shrieks,
Though me, like some old lion in his den,
Fate, stratagems, not ye, have tracked to death ?

The lion is old, but all his teeth are sound.

What ! Ye would seize me ? There, I shake you off.
Ye did not deem these withered arms so strong
That ye five cubs could thus be kept at bay,
Despite your claws and fury and fierce barks.
But I am Dion—Dion, Plato's friend—
And I have faced the rain of human blood,

The lightning of the sword-strokes on my helm,
The thunder of on-rushing cavalry,
When ye were sucking babies at the breast.
And think ye I am one whom ye can slay
By throttling, as an outcast slays her child,
Pinching the life out of its tiny throat ?
Not this shall be my death, for I am royal,
And I must royally die. Go, fetch a sword,
And I shall wed it nobly like a king.

I brought you manhood with my conquering arm,
I offered Syracuse a way to fame.
I could have made our city reign as queen,
With her dominion founded in the sea,
Cemented with wise bands of equal laws,
A constitution wrought by sober minds,
Expanding with its growth ; yet ye would not,
But mewed and babbled, cried and sulked again,
Like children that will quarrel for a coin
And yet its value know not. I am king,
Beyond this honour, if it honour be
To sit enthroned above so base a herd,—
A king of mine own self. My thoughts are matched
With those of gods, I have no kin with you.
Go publish my last words when I am dead,
And sting the city's heart with them. Say, ' Thus,
O men of Syracuse, thus Dion spake,
Falling upon the threshold of his death,
With face turned back, eyes fixed, and cheek un-
blanched,
For one last moment, at the braying mob,
Ere into dark he passed to meet his peers,
The gods and heroes of the nether world.'
Yea, tell the foolish rabble, ' Dion sends
His love and duty as a warrior should,

Unto the sweet earth of his native town,
Soon to be watered with his warmest blood.
He loved her pleasant streets, her golden air,
The circle of her hills, her sapphire sea,
And he loved once, and loved unto his death,
The poor, half-brutal thing her mob became
Under the heel of tyrants ; had he not,
He might have finished out his course of days
And died among the pillows on his bed.
But he so loved his Syracuse that she,
Grown sick of his great heart, let out its red
Upon the pebbles of her streets, and cried,
“ Mine own hands slew him, for he loved too much.”

‘ Too much, ay, at her piteous call he came
And gripped the tyrant’s heel upon your neck,
And overthrew him, bidding you uprise.
And when your silly fathers feared his strength,
And set their murderous snares around his path,
The sword he drew for her, for her he sheathed,
Disdaining, as a warrior, to be wroth
At the snake’s use of its recovered power
To sting the breast that warmed it back to life ;
And he whose word could then have crushed the
town
Into a shapeless ruin at his feet,
Led off to Leontini all his men,
Who, had ye slain him, would upon the ground
Have heaped your bodies for his funeral pyre ;
And who, with eyes that cursed her very stones,
Left Syracuse unharmed, at his command.
Yet on the morrow in your new distress,
Ye were not loath to send with craven haste
Your weeping envoys fawning at his feet
And crying, “ Come and save us ; oh, forget,

Great Dion, how we wronged thee ; come again,
Yet this once more, and save our Syracuse."

' There are no depths in ocean, earth or sky
So deep as Dion's pride ; there is no force
Commensurate with the scorn which curled his lip
In detestation of the fickle world,
Before he plunged for ever down death's gulf.
So proud was he that he despised success,
His manhood was the crown his spirit wore.
His stern heart felt no pulse of arrogant joy
When charging foremost on the routed ranks
Of Dionysius in precipitous flight ;
Nor when, as conqueror, up the city's hill
The wild mob bore him with their loud acclaims,
And women from the house-roofs hailed him king,
Shrilling his praises out to the great deep.
But he was proud, as might some god be proud,
At his self-conquest, when for mercy sued
False Heracleides, whose perfidious plot
To overthrow him well-nigh wrought your doom.
Ye saw the traitor kneel, ye heard his words,
How his swift tongue did hide the poisoned fangs.
But when all voices clamoured, " Let him die,"
The one most wronged obeyed that inner voice
Which bade him spare a fallen enemy,
And, stooping down, he raised and pardoned him,
Well knowing as ye the baseness of the man,
But being too great for meanness like revenge.

' Had Dion not been proud, O Syracuse,
He might have told such tale of woes endured
As would, like some moist south-wind after frost,
Have made your very walls and porticoes
Run down with tears of silent sympathy.

Ye thought that day he read to you unmoved
The letter that his own son wrote to him
In his young blood, sobbed out with broken cries,
While Dionysius pressed the red-hot irons
Against the boy's slim back, that he was stone,
Inhuman, or if human, weak like you,
And would with treason buy him from his chains.
Nay, but ye knew not how his father's heart
Burnt with the fury of the molten sun,
And how the ashes of his being choked
The steadfast voice which cried, "I will not yield,
I will not wrong my blood with treachery
To what is right—the gods deliver him."

'Twas well ye marked him not that other day
When he broke first into the citadel
Deserted by the tyrant, and there found,
Whiter, more stone-like than the marble shaft,
'Gainst which she crouched from him in speechless fear,
His wife, his long-lost Arete, and went
And drew her white hands from her face and said,
"My wife, my own, thy Dion comes again,
And his great love doth wash thy body clean
From sins forced on thee, which were not thine own."
For as she rose and clung about his neck,
Panting and quivering like a hunted fawn,
She downward bent her face in guileless shame
And told him, with her cheek against his breast,
How through those years of captive misery
She, like a priestess, had in secret shrine
Of wedded heart kept ever bright and pure
The vestal flame of her great love for him.
'Twas well ye marked not, Syracusan men,
How unlike stone was Dion then, how fell
His woman's tears upon her woman's hair.

'Twas well ye heard not what his heart pulsed out,
Without one word, into her tight-pressed ear,
Else might ye and your wives have called him weak,
When ye had seen that inner self laid bare
Which he forsook to serve his native land.

' A strong tree which has braved a thousand storms
May totter in the wind which brings its fall,
So now methinks my pride is dying down
When thus I talk before my funeral
Of all the love, hate, duty, self-restraint,
Ingratitude and anguish, which have graved
And scarred old Dion as he is to-day,
With all his years gone by and all his deeds.

' And now, eternal gods, I come to you
Through death, with calm, irrevocable tread.
Farewell, life's toilsome warfare. Like a king,
Great gods, receive me into bliss or woe,
Whiche'er your land affordeth ; set my throne
Among the company of those who strove
To mount by inner conquest, not by blood ;
And who accept and quaff with equal mind
Pleasure or pain, defeat or victory.
I care not to be highest, only peer
Of all the great who are ingathered there ;
If needs my rank be blazoned on my throne,
Inscribe it, " Dion, Tyrant of Himself."

' Ha ! ye have found a sword ; 'tis well, for now
I shall lie down to sleep as soldier should,
Wounded in front, and by a soldier's blade.
O Syracuse, I thought to carve a rock
Rough and unhewn into a perfect shape ;
But, lo ! 'twas only clay wherewith I wrought,

And every wind and rain did melt you down
Into the common mud which tyrants love
To smooth into an easy path to power.

' Here, youths, I do not flinch ; behold my breast,
Shaggy, like front of lion, streaked with grey.
It is your glory to anticipate
Time's tardy slaughter. Come, which will be great
And first to make himself a name and steep
His weakling hands in Dion's royal blood ?
Pray you be quick ! I do not fear the pain,
But would quit life. Here is my naked heart ;
It knocks against the edges of this rib,
But yet not faster than its wont. Come, youths,
Put the sword here and drive it quickly home,
And fix your eyes upon me as I fall,
And mark ye well the grandeur of my death.
For nothing but the red flood bursting forth,
No cry, no groan, no movement of the face
Shall tell you that ye have not slain a god.
Then draw the blade out, blunted where it met
The tempered edge of my self-mastering will,
And bear the crimsoned trophy through the streets,
And show it to the wondering citizens ;
That men may know and tell in aftertimes
How Dion lived and died for Syracuse.'

THE FRENZY OF PROMETHEUS

THE ocean beats its noontide harmonies
Upon the sunlit lines of cragged coast,
And a wild rhythm pulses through my brain
With pauses and responsive melodies ;
And sky and ocean, air and day and night
Topple and reel upon my burning blood,
Run to and fro, whirl round and round and round,
Till, lo ! the cosmic madness breathes a strain
Of perfect music through the universe.
I hear it with my ears, eyes, hands and feet,
I drink it with my breath, my skin sucks in
At every fevered pore fine threads of sound,
Which plunge vibrations of the wind-swept harp
Of earth and heaven deep into my soul,
Till each sense kindles with a freshened life,
And thoughts arise which bring me ease from pain.

O peace, sweet peace ! I melt and ebb away,
On softened rocks outstretch relaxéd limbs,
With half-shut eyes deliciously enthralled.
What passion, what delight, what ecstasies !
Joy fills my veins with rivers of excess ;
I rave, I quiver, as with languid eyes
I see the hot air dance upon the rocks,
And sky, sea, headlands blend in murmurous haze.

Now grander, with the organ's bass that rolls
The under-world in darkness through despair
Of any day-dawn on its inky skies,

The music rolls around me, and above
From shattered cliffs, from booming caverns' mouths,
Pierced by the arrow-screams of frightened gulls.
Now strength, subdued, but waxing more and more,
Reanimates my limbs ; I feel my power
Full as the flooding ocean, or the force
Which grinds the glaciers on their boulder feet.
My hands could pluck up mountains by the roots,
My arm could hurl back ocean from the shore
To wallow in his frothy bed. What hate ! what scorn !
What limitless imaginations stretch
And burst my mind immense ; I stand apart,
I am alone, all-glorious, supreme ;
My huge form like a shadow sits and broods
Upon the globe, gigantic, like the shade
Eclipsing moons. With bowed head on my hand
In gloom excessive, now, behold, I see
Beneath my feet the stream of human life
The sad procession of humanity.

They come, the sons of Hellas, beautiful,
Swift-minded, lithe, with luscious, laughing lips,
That suck delight from every tree of life ;
Born of the sunshine, winds and sounding sea.
They pass, and lo, a mightier nation moves
In stern battalions trampling forests down,
Cleaving the mountains, paving desert lands
With bones that e'en when bleaching face the foe,
Welding soft, outskirt nations into iron,
An iron hand to grasp and hold the world.

Now dust, like smoke, from Asia's central steppes,
Darkens the rigid white of mountain peaks,
And the plains bristle with the Tartar hordes,
Suckled of mares, flat-faced, implacable.

Deadly in war, revengeful, treacherous,
Brown as the cragged glens of Caucasus.
They pass, and nations pass, and like a dream
A throne emerges from the western sea,
The latest empire of a dying world.
E'en as I look, its splendour melts away,
And round me, gathering volume, music rolls,
Till sinews crack and eyes are blind with power,
Till struggles, battles mixed with smoke and blood,
Men, nations, life and death, and desolate cries,
Melt in the inner pulses in my ears
And a wild tempest blows the daylight out.

And now I am alone beneath the stars,
Alone, in infinite silence. Am I God,
That I am so supreme ? Whence is this power ?
Cannot my will repeople these waste lands ?
I cry aloud, the vault of space resounds,
And hollow-sounding echoes, from the stars
Rebounding, shake the earth and crinkle up
The sea in million furrows. Lo, the stars
Now fade, the sun arises, it is day,
Half day, half night ; the sun hath lost his strength,
I am his equal, nay I am his king !
I rise and move across the earth, the seas
Have vanished, and I tread their empty beds,
And crush down continents of powdered bones.

O great Light, late supreme, what need of thee ?
For all are dead, men, nations, life and death,
And God is dead and here alone am I—
I, with strong hands to pluck thee from thy course,
Boundless in passions, will, omnipotent.
The impulses concentrate in my heart
Which erstwhile shook the universe. O Sun,

Acknowledge now thy king, put down thy head
Beneath my feet, and lift me higher still
To regions that out-top the adoring spheres,
And bask in primal thought, too vast to shape
Into similitude of earthly things.

I would have all, know all. I thirst and pant
And hunger for the universe. Now from the earth,
Beneath thy rays, O Sun, the steams arise,
Sheeting the world's dead face in film of cloud,
The voices of the dead. Peace, let me be.
Go on thy way, spent power, leave me here
To reign in silence, rave and scorn and hate,
To glory in my strength, tear down the skies,
Trample the crumbling mountains under foot,
Laugh at the tingling stars, burn with desire
Unconquerable, till the universe
Is shattered at the core, its splinters flung
By force centrifugal beyond the light,
Until the spent stars from their orbits reel,
And, hissing down the flaming steeps of space,
With voice of fire proclaim me God alone.

'IN VIA MORTIS'

O YE great company of dead that sleep
Under the world's green rind, I come to you,
With warm, soft limbs, with eyes that laugh and
weep,
Heart strong to love, and brain pierced through
and through
With thoughts whose rapid lightnings make my
day—
To you my life-stream courses on its way
Through margin-shallows of the eternal deep.

And naked shall I come among you, shorn
Of all life's vanities, its light and power,
Its earthly lusts, its petty hate and scorn,
The gifts and gold I treasured for an hour ;
And even from this house of flesh laid bare,—
A soul transparent as heat-quivering air,
Into your fellowship I shall be born.

I know you not, great forms of giant kings,
Who held dominion in your iron hands,
Who toyed with battles and all valorous things,
Counting yourselves as gods when on the sands
Ye piled the earth's rock fragments in an
heap
To mark and guard the grandeur of your
sleep,
And quaffed the cup which death, our mother,
brings.

I know you not, great warriors, who have fought
When blood flowed like a river at your feet,
And each death which your thunderous sword-strokes
wrought,
Than love's wild rain of kisses was more sweet.
I know you not, great minds, who with the pen
Have graven on the fiery hearts of men
Hopes that breed hope and thoughts that kindle
thought.

But ye are there, ingathered in the realm
Where tongueless spirits speak from heart to
heart,
And eyeless mariners without a helm
Steer down the seas where ever close and part
The windless clouds ; and all ye know is this,
Ye are not as ye were in pain or bliss,
But a strange numbness doth all thought o'erwhelm.

And I shall meet you, O ye mighty dead,
Come late into your kingdom through the gates
Of one fierce anguish whitherto I tread,
With heart that now forgets, now meditates
Upon the wide fields stretching far away
Where the dead wander past the bounds of
day,
Past life, past death, past every pain and dread.

Oft, when the winter sun slopes down to rest
Across the long, crisp fields of gilded white,
And without sound upon earth's level breast
The grey tide floods around of drowning night,
A whisper, like a distant battle's roll
Heard over mountains, creeps into my soul,
And there I entertain it like a guest.

It is the echo of your former pains,
 Great dead, who lie so still beneath the
 ground ;
 Its voice is as the night wind after rains,
 The flight of eagle wings which once were
 bound,
 And as I listen in the starlit air
 My spirit waxeth stronger than despair,
 Till in your might I break life’s prison chains.

Then mount I swiftly to your dark abodes,
 Beyond our mortal ken, where now ye dwell
 In houses wrought of dreams on dusky roads
 Which lead in mazes whither none may tell,
 For they who thread them faint beside the
 way,
 And ever as they pass through twilight grey
 Doubt walks beside them and a terror goads.

And there the great dead welcome me and bring
 Their cups of tasteless pleasure to my mouth ;
 Here am I little worth, there am I king,
 For pulsing life still slakes my spirit’s drouth,
 And he who yet doth hold the gift of life
 Is mightier than the heroes of past strife
 Who have been mowed in death’s great harvesting.

And here and there along the silent streets
 I see some face I knew, perchance I loved ;
 And as I call it each blank wall repeats
 The uttered name, and swift the form hath
 moved
 And heedless of me passes on and on,
 Till lo, the vision from my sight hath gone
 Softly as night at touch of dawn retreats.

Yet must life's vision fade and I shall come,
O mighty dead, into your hidden land,
When these eyes see not and these lips are dumb,
And all life's flowers slip from this nerveless hand ;
Then will ye gather round me like a tide
And with your faces the strange scenery hide,
While your weird music doth each sense benumb.

So would I live this life's brief span, great dead,
As ye once lived it, with an iron will,
A heart of steel to conquer, a mind fed
On richest hopes and purposes, until
Well pleased ye set for me a royal throne,
And welcome as confederate with your own
The soul that goes forth from my dying bed.

THOR

HERE stood the great god Thor,
There he planted his foot,
And the whole world shook, from the shore
To the circle of mountains God put
For its crown in the days of yore.

The waves of the sea uprose,
The trees of the wood were uptorn,
Down from the Alps' crown of snows
The glacial avalanche borne
Thundered at daylight's close.

But the moon-lady curled at his feet,
Like a smoke which will not stir
When the summer hills swoon with the heat,
Till his passion was centred on her,
And the shame of his yielding grew sweet.

Empty the moon-lady's car,
And idly it floated away,
Tipped up as she left it afar,
Pale in the red death of day,
With its nether lip turned to a star.

Fearful the face of the god,
Stubborn with sense of his power,
The seas would roll back at his nod
And the thunder-voiced thunder-clouds lower,
While the lightning he broke as a rod.

Fearful his face was in war,
Iron with fixed look of hate,
Through the battle-smoke thick and the roar
He strode with invincible weight,
Till the legions fell back before Thor.

But the white thing that curled at his feet
Rose up slowly beside him like mist,
Indefinite, wan, incomplete,
Till she touched the rope veins on his wrist
And love pulsed to his heart with a beat.

Then he looked, and from under her hair,
As from out of a mist grew her eyes,
And firmer her flesh was and fair
With the tint of the sorrowful skies,
Sun-widowed and veiled with thin air.

She seemed of each lovable thing
The soul that infused it with grace,
Her thoughts were the song the birds sing,
The glory of flowers was her face
And her smile was the smile of the spring.

Madly his blood with a bound
Leaped from his heart to his brain,
Till his thoughts and his senses were drowned
In the ache of a longing like pain,
In a hush that was louder than sound.

Then the god, bending his face,
'Loveliest,' said he, 'if death
Mocked me with skulls in this place
And age and spent strength and spent breath,
Yet would I yield to thy grace;

‘ Yet would I circle thee, love,
With these arms which are smoking from wars,
Though the father up-gathered above,
In his anger, each ocean that roars,
Each boulder the cataracts shoved,

‘ To hurl at me down from his throne,
Though the flood were as wide as the sky,
Yea, love, I am thine, all thine own,
Strong as the ocean to lie
Slave to thy bidding alone.’

Folds of her vesture fell soft,
As she lifted her eyes up to his :
‘ Nay, love, for a man speaketh oft
In words that are hot as a kiss,
But man’s love may be donned and be doft.’

‘ Love would have life for its field—
Love would have death for its goal ;
And the passion of war must yield
To the passion of love in the soul,
And the eyes that Love kisses are sealed.’

‘ Wouldst thou love if the scorn of the world
Covered thy head with its briars ;
When, soft as an infant curled
In its cradle, thou, chained with desires,
Lay helpless when flags were unfurled ? ’

Fiercely the god’s anger broke,
Fired with the flames in his blood :
‘ Who careth what words may be spoke ?
For the feet of this love is a flood,
And its finger the weight of a yoke.

THOR

' I bow me, sweet, under its power,
 I, who have stooped to none ;
 I bring thee my strength for a dower,
 And deeds like the path of the sun ;
 I am thine for an age or an hour.'

Then the moon-lady softly unwound
 The girdle of arms interlaced,
 And the gold of her tresses unbound,
 Till it fell from her head to her waist,
 And then from her waist to the ground.

' Love, thou art mine, thou art mine,'
 Softly she uttered a spell ;
 ' Under the froth is the wine,
 Under the ocean is hell,
 Over the ocean stars shine.

' Lull him, ye winds of the South,
 Charm him, ye rivers that sing,
 Flowers be the kiss on his mouth,
 Let his heart be the heart of the spring,
 And his passion the hot summer drouth.'

Swiftly extending her hands,
 She made a gold dome of her hair ;
 Dumb with amazement he stands,
 Till down, without noise in the air,
 The moon-car descends to the sands.

He taketh her fingers in his,
 Shorn of his strength and his will ;
 His brave heart trembles with bliss—
 Trembles and will not be still,
 Mad with the wine of her kiss.

They mount in the car, and its beams
 Shoot over the sea and the earth,
And clothe in a net-work of dreams
 The mountains where rivers have birth,
And the lakes that are fed by the streams.

Swiftly ascending, the car
 Silvers the clouds in its flight,
Piercing the ether afar
 Up to a bridge out of sight
That skirteth the path of a star.

One end of the bridge lay on land,
 The other hung over the deep ;
It was fashioned of ropes of grey sand,
 And cemented together with sleep,
With its undergirths formed like a hand.

Pleasant the land to the sight,
 Laden with blossoms and trees,
And the grasses to left and to right
 Waved in the wind like the seas,
When the blue day is high in the height.

Under the breezy bowers
 Cushions of moss were laid,
And ever through sultry hours
 Fairy-like fountains played,
Cooling the earth with their showers.

The horizon was crowned with blue hills,
 And woodland and meadowland lay
Lit with the glory which thrills
 Souls in some dreamland way,
Where the nightingales sing to the rills.

Deer and the white kine feed
On the foam-fretted shores of the lake,
And through many a flowery mead,
And from many a forest and brake,
The gold birds of paradise speed.

The lissome moon-lady led on
Up to a bower on a hill
With the flowers at its door rained upon
By a fountain as constant and still
As the bow in the cloud that has gone.

‘ O love, thou art weary,’ she said,
‘ Who erst was so valiant and strong,
And here will I make thee a bed,
And here will I sing thee a song
To the tune of the leaves overhead.

‘ And here will thy great strength flow,
Melted away in the sweet,
Soft touch of ineffable woe,
Which is heart of the joy made complete,
And the taste of the pleasure we know.’

Where the mosses were piled in a heap,
He laid his giant form down,
And she charmed all his senses to sleep,
With her hands on his head like a crown,
Till the sound of his breathing was deep.

With a noise like a serpent’s hiss,
The moon-lady bent her head,
And she sucked out his breath with a kiss—
A kiss that was subtle and dread,
Like the sorrow which lurks in a bliss.

Then she rose and waved her hands
 In circles over the sod,
And her gold hair wove in strands
 Round the limbs of the sleeping god,
With the strength of adamant bands.

She opened the great clenched fist,
 And softly the lady withdrew,
Was it only a serpent that hissed ?
 For her face is transparent as dew,
And her garments are thin as the mist.

Spell-bound on the dreamland floor,
 Chained with the golden hair,
Weak as a babe lay Thor,
 While the fountain played soft in the air,
And the nightingales sang evermore.

Like a babe in its cradle curled,
 He was chained with his chain of desires,
Though they needed his arm in the world,
 For the battle-strife raged and its fires,
And the flags of the gods were unfurled.

Then Odin, the father of Heaven,
 Called a council of gods on high,
To each was a white cloud given
 At the foot of his throne in the sky,
And the steps of his throne were seven.

‘ Children,’ the father cried,
 ‘ Lost is the great god Thor,
Lost is the sword at his side,
 Lost is his arm in the war,
And the fury which all things defied.

‘ In the heart of a dreamland bower,
Sleepeth he under a spell,
For he yielded his strength for an hour,
And under the meshes of Hell
He is chained by invincible power.

‘ None may the meshes unbind ;
Strength must return to his will,
And himself must unshackle his mind
From the dreams he is dreaming still,
In the moon-lady’s tresses entwined.

‘ Over the mountains the road,
Dismal and drear to return,
Face it he must with his load,
Though the underbrakes crackle and burn,
Though the serpent-bites blister and goad.

‘ Not a mere shadow is sin,
Clinging like wine to the lip,
To be wiped from the mouth and the chin
After man taketh a sip ;
But a poison that lurketh within.

‘ The forces that hold back the sea,
That grapple the earth from beneath,
Are not older than those which decree
The marriage of sin unto death
In the sinner, whoever he be.

‘ Who of our numbers will go
Up to the death-tainted land,
Braving the dangers, and so
Reaching the heart and the hand
And the form of the god lying low ? ’

‘ Sire,’ answered Balder the fair,
 ‘ Rugged the journey and long,
Manifold dangers are there,
 But my heart and my arms are strong,
And my soul is as pure as the air.

‘ I will go, for we need him in war,
 And without him we struggle and die ;
I will put on the armour he bore
 And gird on his sword to my thigh ;
I will sit by and say, “ I am Thor.”

‘ Perchance when he opens his eyes,
 Shorn of his armour of plate,
Smitten with rage and surprise,
 Burning with anger and hate,
He will burst from the bed where he lies.

‘ Swift as the kiss of the fire,
 Knowledge shall flash to his brain,
And the thought of his past self inspire
 His spirit with valour again,
Till he shatter the bonds of desire.’

So Balder, the fairest of all,
 And purest of gods by the throne,
Went from the heavenly hall
 Into the darkness alone,
To loosen the god from his thrall.

Black was the charger he rode,
 Winged, and its eye-balls of fire ;
From mountain to mountain it trode,
 Spurning the valleys as mire,
Till it sprang into air with its load.

THOR

Then swift, with its neck side-curled,
 Half hid in the smoke of its breath,
Upward it bounded, and hurled
 Volleys and splinters of death
From the fire of its hoofs on the world.

The moon-lady leaned from her car
 And beheld the fierce course of the god,
For, as though with the birth of a star,
 A fire track as straight as a rod
Burnt in the heavens afar.

Then she trembled and sickened with fear,
 Till her face grew as white as the mist
When at day-dawn the stars disappear,
 And her body did coil and untwist
Like a serpent's folds caught in a weir.

Her heart was a fire that was spent,
 Her lips could not utter a charm,
And she cowered from his sight as he went,
 While Balder flew by without harm,
'Neath the shield of a pure intent.

He came to the moon-lady's bower,
 And girded the sword to his thigh,
And put on the cincture of power,
 Unbound from the god lying by,
Nor waited a day nor an hour ;

For, startled, the sleeper awoke,
 Black-visaged, like storm on the skies ;
But Balder sat upright, nor spoke,
 Till the flames darted out of Thor's eyes,
And the passionate silence he broke.

‘ Who is it, when dreaming is o’er,
 Mocks me with helm like to mine,
Ungirding the armour I bore,
 From the sweet silken nets that entwine ? ’
Quoth Balder, ‘ Behold ! I am Thor.

‘ I am he that was “ Thunderer ” called,
 And my fame is as wide as the world ;
At my anger the rocks were appalled,
 And the waves of the sea were up-curled,
But now I am weak and enthralled.

‘ The battle is fierce on the earth,
 While I sit here idle and still ;
Unfulfilled are the hopes of my birth,
 For the strength of the mind is the will,
And the will is more potent than girth.

‘ The foes of the gods wax bold,
 And they mock at the armies of heaven ;
At their banquets the story is told—
 “ A weak woman’s heart hath been given
To Thor, the avenger of old.” ’

‘ And the wives as they sit by the cot,
 Sing, “ Sleep, for the god cannot come ;
Sleep, the avenger is not ;
 Hush, let his praises be dumb ;
Hush, let his name be forgot.” ’

Then the god, smitten with pain,
 Shaméd and stung to the heart,
Knowing a god’s voice again,
 Rending his fetters apart,
Sprang from the moon-lady’s chain.

Instantly vanished in night
Fountains and meadows and streams,
Never a glimmer of light
Lit up the palace of dreams,
As the god made his way, without sight,

Back to the heavenly shore,
Over mountain and wild ravine,
Morasses, and seas that roar,
Till the portals of heaven were seen
And he stood in Valhalla once more.

THE FEUD

' I HEAR a cry from the Sansard cave,
O mother, will no one hearken ?
A cry of the lost, will no one save ?
A cry of the dead, though the oceans rave,
And the scream of a gull as he wheels o'er a grave,
While the shadows darken and darken.'

' Oh, hush thee, child, for the night is wet,
And the cloud-caves split asunder,
With lightning in a jagged fret,
Like the gleam of a salmon in the net,
When the rocks are rich in the red sunset,
And the stream rolls down in thunder.'

' Mother, O mother, a pain at my heart,
A pang like the pang of dying.'
' Oh, hush thee, child, for the wild birds dart
Up and down, and close and part,
Wheeling round where the black cliffs start,
And the foam at their feet is flying.'

' O mother, a strife like the black clouds' strife,
And a peace that cometh after.'
' Hush, child, for peace is the end of life,
And the heart of a maiden finds peace as a wife,
But the sky and the cliffs and the ocean are rife
With the storm and thunder's laughter.'

‘ Come in, my sons, come in and rest,
For the shadows darken and darken,
And your sister is pale as the white swan’s breast,
And her eyes are fixed and her lips are pressed
In the death of a name ye might have guessed,
Had ye twain been here to hearken.’

‘ Hush, mother, a corpse lies on the sand,
And the spray is round it driven,
It lies on its face, and one white hand
Points through the mist on the belt of strand
To where the cliffs of Sansard stand,
And the ocean’s strength is riven.’

‘ Was it God, my sons, who laid him there ?
Or the sea that left him sleeping ? ’
‘ Nay, mother, our dirks where his heart was bare,
As swift as the rain through the teeth of the air ;
And the foam-fingers play in the Saxon’s hair,
While the tides are round him creeping.’

‘ Oh, curses on you, hand and head,
Like the rains in this wild weather,
The guilt of blood is swift and dread,
Your sister’s face is cold and dead,
Ye may not part whom God would wed
And love hath knit together.’

DAWN

THE immortal spirit hath no bars
To circumscribe its dwelling place ;
My soul hath pastured with the stars
Upon the meadow-lands of space.

My mind and ear at times have caught,
From realms beyond our mortal reach,
The utterance of Eternal Thought
Of which all nature is the speech.

And high above the seas and lands,
On peaks just tipped with morning light,
My dauntless spirit mutely stands
With eagle wings outspread for flight.

A REVERIE

O TENDER love of long ago,
O buried love, so near me still,
On tides of thought that ebb and flow,
 Beyond the empire of the will ;
To-night with mingled joy and pain
I fold thee to my heart again.

And down the meadows, dear, we stray,
 And under woods still clothed in green,
Though many Springs have passed away
 And many harvests there have been,
Since through the youth-enchanted land
We wandered idly hand in hand.

Then every brook was loud with song,
 And every tree was stirred with love,
And every breeze that passed along
 Was like the breath of God above ;—
And now to-night we go the ways
We went in those sweet summer days.

Dear love, thy dark and earnest eyes
 Look up as tender as of yore,
And, purer than the evening skies,
 Thy cheeks have still the rose they wore ;
I—I have changed, but thou art fair
And fresh as in life's morning air.

What little hands these were to chain
So many years a wayward heart ;
How slight a girlish form to reign
As queen upon a throne apart
In a man's thought, through hopes and fears,
And all the changes of the years.

Dear girl, behold, thy boy is now
A man and grown to middle age ;
The lines are deep upon his brow,
His heart hath been grief's hermitage ;
But hidden where no eye can see,
His boyhood's love still lives for thee,—

Still blooms above thy grave to-day,
Where death hath harvested the land,
Though such long years have passed away
Since down the meadows, hand in hand,
We went with hearts too full to know
How deep their love was long ago.

OLD LETTERS

THE house was silent, and the light
Was fading from the western glow ;
I read, till tears had dimmed my sight,
Some letters written long ago.

The voices that have passed away,
The faces that have turned to mould,
Were round me in the room to-day,
And laughed and chatted as of old.

The thoughts that youth was wont to think,
The hopes now dead for evermore,
Came from the lines of faded ink,
As sweet and earnest as of yore.

I laid the letters by and dreamed
The dear, dead past to life again ;
The present and its purpose seemed
A fading vision full of pain.

Then, with a sudden shout of glee,
The children burst into the room,
Their little faces were to me
As sunrise in the cloud of gloom.

The world was full of meaning still,
For love will live though loved ones die ;
I turned upon life's darkened hill
And gloried in the morning sky.

THE WAYSIDE CROSS

A WAYSIDE cross at set of day
Unto my spirit thus did say—

‘ O soul, my branching arms you see
Point four ways to infinity.

‘ One points to infinite above,
To show the height of heavenly love.

‘ Two point to infinite width, which shows
That heavenly love no limit knows.

‘ One points to infinite beneath,
To show God’s love is under death.

‘ The four arms join, an emblem sweet
That in God’s heart all loves will meet.’

I thanked the cross as I turned away
For such sweet thoughts in the twilight grey.

A BIRTHDAY

THE three Fates sat in a house of birth,
 Ah, welladay ; ah, welladay ;
Their eyes were bright, but not with mirth—
They have no love for the sons of earth—
 And their lips were parched and grey.

Their grey locks hung from brow to chin,
 Ah, welladay ; ah, welladay ;
One held the distaff, and one did spin,
And one held shears in her fingers thin ;
 Three silent hags were they.

We saw not the thread which the sisters spun,
 Ah, welladay ; ah, welladay ;
Nor whether in white or in black begun,
But on her with the shears, that elder one,
 Our eyes were fixed alway.

A thread, I ween, of tangled years,
 Ah, welladay ; ah, welladay ;
God stay her hand that holds the shears ;
Our hopes are stronger than our fears,—
 God spare him, come what may.

April 7, 1888.

IN THE CHURCHYARD

As now my feet are straying
Where all the dead are lying,
O trees, what are ye saying
That sets my soul a-sighing ?

Your sound is as the weeping
Of one that dreads the morrow,
Or sob of sad heart sleeping
For fulness of its sorrow.

Methinks your rootlets, groping
Beneath the dark earth's layers,
Have found the doubt and hoping,
The blasphemies and prayers,

Of hearts that here are feeding
The worm ; and now, in pity,
Ye storm with interceding
The floor of God's great city.

THE CRIPPLE

I MET once, in a country lane,
A little cripple, pale and thin,
Who from my presence sought again
The shadows she had hidden in.

Her wasted cheeks the sunset skies
Had hallowed with their fading glow ;
And in her large and lustrous eyes
There dwelt a child's unuttered woe.

She crept into the autumn wood,
The parted bushes closed behind ;
Poor little heart, I understood
The shameless shame that filled her mind.

I understood, and loved her well
For one sad face I loved of yore,—
And down the lane the dead leaves fell,
Like dreams that pass for evermore.

AT THE CROSS ROADS

HERE on life's Cross Roads, friend, our ways now sever,
And each must journey 'neath an altered sky,
Yet in the years to come our hearts will never
Forget the glad hours of the days gone by.

Oft have we sat before the bright logs blazing
On the wide hearth, and closed the winter's day ;
Oft in the meadows, where the cows were grazing,
Have watched the summer sunsets die away.

Oft have we sped, girt with the engine's thunder,
Down the bright track into the golden dawn ;
Oft through dark forests when the moon, in wonder,
Peered 'neath the trees at the long smoke outdrawn.

And now when autumn fields are filled with beauty,
And while the breath of harvest is so sweet,
We who have heard afar the voice of duty,
Shake hands and part where these two roadways
meet.

Dear brother heart, we leave farewells unspoken,
We shall not change nor can our love forget,
For on life's sky, by sun and shadow broken,
True friendship is a star that does not set.

ANDANTE

ANDANTE

THE days and weeks are going, love,
The years roll on apace,
And the hand of time is showing, love,
In the care-lines on thy face ;

But the tie that bound our hearts, love,
In the morning's golden haze,
Is a tie that never parts, love,
With the passing of the days.

For though Death's arm be strong, love,
Our love its light will shed,
And like a glorious song, love,
Will live when Death is dead.

SORROW'S WAKING

ONCE a maiden,
Heavy-laden,
Sought to borrow
Sleep from sorrow.

Sweet the taking,
But the waking
In the numbness
And the dumbness
Of the day-dawn,
With the grey lawn
Softly plaining
In the raining,
And the meadows
Hid in shadows,
Was more dreary
Than the weary
Mounds which sever
Hearts for ever,
Where Death's reaping
Leaves man sleeping
In God's keeping.

A WAIF

A WAIF

THIS place is holy, Christ has been
In it to-day ;
The little girl behind this screen
Has passed away.

Her soul has sought the boundless deep
Beyond these skies.
Then fold her wasted hands to sleep,
And close her eyes.

No more their glazing pupils see
This crowded ward ;
She walks now in eternity
Beside her Lord.

Put back the dark hair from her brow,
And smooth her cheek ;
Those white lips would be praying now
If they could speak.

Make straight each crippled limb again,
And raise her head ;
It once would make her cry with pain
To touch her bed.

The winter shadows as they fall
Begin to hide
The little texts upon the wall
That were her pride.

But where she wanders far away
The hills are bright ;
She rests, our little waif and stray,
With God to-night.

A SISTER OF CHARITY

SHE made a nunnery of her life,
Plain duties hedged it round,
No echoes of the outer strife
Could reach its hallowed ground.

Her rule was simple as her creed,
She tried to do each day
Some act of kindness that might speed
A sad soul on its way.

She had no wealth, and yet she made
So many rich at heart ;
Her lot was hidden, yet she played
No inconspicuous part.

Some wondered men had passed her by,
Some said she would not wed,
I think the secret truth must lie
Long buried with the dead.

That cheery smile, that gentle touch,
That heart so free from stain,
Could have no other source but such
As lies in conquered pain.

All living creatures loved her well,
And blessed the ground she trod ;
The pencilings in her Bible tell
Her communing with God.

And when the call came suddenly,
And sleep preceded death,
There was no struggle we could see,
No hard and laboured breath.

Gently as dawn the end drew nigh ;
Her life had been so sweet,
I think she did not need to die
To reach the Master's feet.

HIS PARTING

THEY bore the little dying boy
Through his beloved wood,
The sweet song-sparrows hushed their joy,
The pine trees silent stood.

The tiny ripples from the lake
Crept noiseless down the shore,
And even the brook seemed for his sake
Less boisterous than before.

The sunbeams never blinked their eyes,
Quite still were light and shade,
While here and there the droning flies
A solemn music made.

'Twas plain his woodland friends had heard,
And nature all around
Mourned, as when some sweet singing bird
Has fallen to the ground.

But he, our little dying boy,
Forgetting all his pain,
Passed Prattling by in childish joy
And never came again.

'LITTLE FRIEND'S' GRAVE

BUILD a house for ' Little Friend,'
Underneath the sunniest grass,
In a place where birds' songs blend
On the breezes as they pass.

Dig it not with sorrow's spade,
Use no sharp-edged tools of pain,
Nothing there must cast a shade,
Nothing there must leave a stain.

Build the walls of hope and joy,
Gladsome as the flowers and trees,
Else the little merry boy
Will not rest in it at ease.

Bring no torch or other light,
As though darkness could be there,
For a soul so pure and bright
Will give radiance everywhere.

Build the roof of faith and love,
Pillared on foundations deep,
That the rain of tears above
May not mar his happy sleep.

Make no windows, as though he
Needed peep-holes to the skies,
For the vast Eternity
Now is open to his eyes.

'LITTLE FRIEND'S' GRAVE

Build no staircase for his feet,
Make no door-way in the wall,
For he treads the golden street
Where the Christ is all in all.

Only let the cross be set
Upright in the hallowed ground,
Lest the stricken heart forget
Where the cure of grief is found.

MY LITTLE SON

My little son, my little son, he calls to me for ever
Across the gulfs and through the mists which
shroud him from my sight ;
I hear him in the noonday, in the midst of all the
turmoil,
I hear him, oh, so plainly, in the silence of the night.

My little son, my little son, I see in clearest vision
The merry face, the deep, clear eyes, the crown of
golden hair.
But these, ah, these are sleeping where the hillside
glows with sunset,
And the little boy, my darling that I loved so, is not
there.

My little son, my little son, there are starry paths at
night-time,
Above the swaying tree-tops where the birds are fast
asleep ;
Does he wander up and down them with the winds in
endless play-time ?
Does he read in sudden manhood all the wonders
of the deep ?

My little son, my little son, he hovers ever near me,
I meet him in the garden walks, he speaks in wind
and rain ;
He comes and nestles by me on my pillow in the
darkness,
Till the golden hands of sunrise draw him back to
God again.

ANNIVERSARY

THE weary weeks come round again—
 Come round again with frost and cold,
With falling leaves and dripping rain
 And gleams of sun on autumn gold.

Through windows in the House of Time
 I see great forces come and go,
I know the issues are sublime,
 The trumpet-call to arms, I know.

But still my eyes go straining far,
 Above the tumult and the noise,
To where, beyond the furthest star,
 My darling plays among his toys.

I hear the laughter from his heart,
 I see the sunshine in his eyes,
And then I waken with a start
 And face once more the hollow skies.

October 13, 1908.

THROUGH THE GATES OF TIME

INTO the Infinite
Pass we for ever,
Knowing the Light of Light
Faileth us never.

GOD'S YOUTH

IN the star-depths of children's eyes,
Where dwells the light of truth,
I see, reflected from the skies,
God's own eternal youth:

ON AN OLD VENETIAN PORTRAIT

THE features loom out of the darkness
As brown as an ancient scroll,
But the eyes gleam on with the fire that shone
In the dead man's living soul.

He is clad in a cardinal's mantle,
And he wears the cap of state,
But his lip is curled in a sneer at the world,
And his glance is full of hate.

Old age has just touched with its winter
The hair on his lip and chin,
He stooped, no doubt, as he walked about,
And the blood in his veins was thin.

His date and his title I know not,
But I know that the man is there,
As cruel and cold as in days of old,
When he schemed for the Pontiff's chair.

He never could get into Heaven,
Though his lands were all given to pay
For prayers to be said on behalf of the dead
From now till the judgment day.

His palace, his statues, and pictures
Were Heaven, at least for a time,
And now he is, 'Where?'—why an ornament there
On my wall, and I think him sublime.

For the gold of another sunset
Falls over him even now,
And it deepens the red of the cap on his head,
And it brings out the lines on his brow.

The ages have died into silence,
And men have forgotten his tomb,
But he still sits there in his cardinal's chair,
And he watches me now in the gloom.

A DREAM OF THE PREHISTORIC

NAKED and shaggy, they herded at eve by the sound
of the seas,
When the sky and the ocean were red as with blood
from the battles of God,
And the wind like a monster sped forth with its feet
on the rocks and the trees,
And the sands of the desert blew over the wastes
of the drought-smitten sod.

Here, mad with the torments of hunger, despairing
they sank to their rest,
Some crouching alone in their anguish, some gathered
in groups on the beach ;
And with tears almost human the mother looked
down at the babe on her breast,
And her pain was the germ of our love, and her cry
was the root of our speech.

Then a cloud from the sunset arose, like a cormorant
gorged with its prey,
And extended its wings on the sky till it smothered
the stars in its gloom,
And ever the famine-worn faces were wet with the
wind-carried spray,
And dimly the voice of the deep to their ears was a
portent of doom.

And the dawn that rose up on the morrow, apparelled
in gold like a priest,
Through the smoke of the incense of morning,
looked down on a vision of death ;
For the vultures were gathered together and circled
with joy to their feast
On hearts that had ceased from their sorrow, and
lips that had yielded their breath.

Then the ages went by like a dream, and the shore-line emerged from the deep,
And the stars as they watched through the years
saw a change on the face of the earth ;
For over the blanket of sand that had covered the
dead in their sleep
Great forests grew up with their green, and the
sources of rivers had birth.

And here in the after-times man, the white-faced and
smooth-handed, came by,
And he built him a city to dwell in and temples of
prayer to his God ;
He filled it with music and beauty, his spirit aspired
to the sky,
While the dead by whose pain it was fashioned lay
under the ground that he trod.

He wrenched from great Nature her secrets, the stars
in their courses he named,
He weighed them and measured their orbits ; he
harnessed the horses of steam ;
He captured the lightnings of heaven, the waves of
the ocean he tamed,—
And ever the wonder amazed him as one that
awakes from a dream.

But under the streets and the markets, the banks and
the temples of prayer,
Where humanity laboured and plotted, or loved
with an instinct divine,
Deep down in the silence and gloom of the earth that
had shrouded them there,
Were the fossil remains of a skull and the bones of
what once was a spine.

Enfolded in darkness for ever, untouched by the
changes above,
And mingled as clay with the clay which the hands
of the ages had brought,
Were the hearts in whose furnace of anguish was
smelted the gold of our love,
And the brains from whose twilight of instinct has
risen the dawn of our thought.

But the law, that was victor of old with its heel on the
neck of the brute,
Still tramples our hearts in the darkness, still grinds
down our face in the dust ;
We are sown in corruption and anguish—whose
fingers will gather the fruit ?
Our life is but lent for a season—for whom do we
hold it in trust ?

In the vault of the sky overhead, in the gulfs that lie
under our feet,
The wheels of the universe turn, and the laws of the
universe blend ;
The pulse of our life is in tune with the rhythm of
forces that beat
In the surf of the furthest star's sea, and are spent
and regathered to spend.

Yet we trust in the will of the Being whose fingers
have spangled the night
With the dust of a myriad worlds, and who speaks
in the thunders of space ;
Though we see not the start or the finish, though
vainly we cry for the light,
Let us mount in the glory of manhood and meet the
God-Man face to face.

KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE

THEY were islanders, our fathers were,
 And they watched the encircling seas,
And their hearts drank in the ceaseless stir,
 And the freedom of the breeze ;
Till they chafed at their narrow bounds
 And longed for the sweep of the main,
And they fretted and fumed like hounds
 Held in within sight of the plain
 And the play
 And the prey.

So they built them ships of wood, and sailed
 To many an unknown coast ;
They braved the storm and battles hailed,
 And danger they loved most ;
Till the tiny ships of wood
 Grew powerful on the globe,
And the new-found lands for good
 They wrapped in a wondrous robe
 Of bold design,
 Our brave ensign.

And islanders yet in a way are we,
 Our knowledge is still confined,
And we hear the roar of encircling sea,
 To be crossed in the ship of the mind ;

And we dream of lands afar,
Unknown, unconquered yet,
And we chafe at the bounds there are,
And our spirits fume and fret
For the prize
Of the wise.

But we 'll never do aught, I know, unless
We are brave as our sires of old,
And face like them the bitterness
Of the battle and storm and cold ;
Unless we boldly stand,
When men would hold us back,
With the tiller in our hand,
And our eyes to the shining track
Of what may be
Beyond the sea.

There are rocks out there in that wide, wide sea,
'Neath many a darkling stream,
And souls that once sailed out bold and free
Have been carried away in a dream ;
For they never came back again—
On the deep the ships were lost ;
But in spite of the danger and pain,
The ocean has still to be crossed,
And none can this do
But the brave and the true.

'POETAE SILVARUM'

O SINGING birds, O singing birds, ye sing in field and sky
The simple songs of love and joy ye sang in days gone by ;
I hear you in the meadows now and up the mountain stream,
And as I listen to your voice I dream an old-world dream.

O singing birds, O singing birds, ye sang in ancient Greece
Ere Paris found the fatal fruit, or Jason sought the fleece ;
And from the Attic mountain tops ye saw the dawn uprise,
Her feet upon the golden sea and wonder in her eyes.

Ye heard the shepherd pipe at dawn, and piped again with him
Until the flocks came winding out where forest glades were dim ;
Ye sang in dewy dell and woke the wild-flower from its dream,
And watched the fauns and satyrs dance besidé the woodland stream.

Ye sang your songs at noonday when Athenian crews
went down
Between the dusty walls that joined Peiræus with
the town,
Until across the sparkling deep the triremes sailed
away,
And up Poseidon's altar steps the women went to pray.

Ye sang your songs at eventide when on the sacred hill
The light was slowly dying down and mists were
sleeping still ;
While two by two the maidens went, with lilies in
their hand,
And asked each other of the love they could not
understand.

And in the night, when stars looked down and herds
were gathered in,
And little brooks with tinkling voice made music
clear and thin,
At intervals your note again would thrill the forest's
rest,
When dreamland fancies woke your joy or breezes
stirred your nest.

O singing birds, O singing birds, who pipe in shade
and sun,
Ye fill the world with gladness still, ye bind us all
in one ;
Your songs are of untroubled days, of mornings glad
and free,
And merry rivers leaping down the mountains to the
sea.

O singing birds, O singing birds, the ages pass away,
The world is growing old, and we grow older day by
day ;
Pour out your deathless songs again to men of every
tongue,
And wake the music in man's heart that keeps the
old world young.

STELLA

(From the Greek anthology)

DEAR Love, thou gazest at the starlit skies,
Thou who art star to me ;
Would I were heaven with all its myriad eyes
Gazing on thee.

A SONG OF TRIUMPH

YE tempests that sweep o'er the deep, heavy-browed
with the cloud of the rain,
Assemble in wonder with thunder and bellowing
voice of the main,
With the roar that comes forth from the North when
the ice-peaks roll down to the sea,
And the dream of the gleaming white silence is hoarse
with waves' laughter and glee ;—
Yea, gather, ye tempests, on wings, with the strings
of God's harp in your hands,
And your voices upraise in the praise of the Lord of
the seas and the lands.

Sing the triumph of Man, who began in the caves
where the waves lay asleep,
In a cradle made green by the sheen of the sunlight
that smote on the deep,
When the ages were young and the tongue of the
universe sounded its praise,
Over the dismal, abysmal, dark voids where God went
on His ways
To crown His creations with nations of flowering and
animate life,—
Implanting a germ in the worm that would grow to
His image through strife.

The jungles that spread on the bed of the plain, where
the rain and the snow
Came down from the mountains a river, to shiver in
torrents below,
Were alight with the bright-coloured snakes and the
tigers that lurked for their prey,
While the bird that was heard in the boughs had a
plumage more splendid than day,
But the lord at whose word all were humbled was Man
who in majesty came ;—
Immortal as God and who trod with his body erect
as a flame.

Let the praise of Man's form by the storm be out-
rolled to the gold of the West,
To the edge of the ledge of the clouds where the sun
marches down to his rest.
For out of the rout of fierce famine, of warfare and
hunger and strain,
Man's body was fashioned and passioned in frenzy of
fury and pain.
He goes with his face upon space, like a god he is
girded with might,
His desire is the fire of a star that illumines a limitless
night.

His love is above and beneath him, a mountain and
fountain of fire ;
In his blood is the flood of the tiger and claws of its
hate and desire ;
In his thought is the speed of the steed as it courses
untrammelled and free,
With its sinews astrain on the plain where the winds
are as wide as the sea ;

But his soul is the roll of the ocean that murmurs in darkness and day,
A part of the heart of creation that lives while the ages decay.

It mounts upon wings through the rings of the night
that is bright with the stars,
Till at length in its strength it has broken the chains
of the flesh and its bars,
And waits for the hush and the flush of the dawn of
which God is the sun ;—
The dawn that will rise in the skies when the night
of our warfare is done ;
When Man shall behold, in the gold of the firmament
passing in heat,
The face of the Proved and Beloved who descends
with the stars at His feet.

Then the past shall be cast like the sand that a hand
may throw out to the sea,
Shall be cast out of sight into night, and our manhood,
resplendent and free,
Shall wander in dreams by the streams where the
waters are silent as sleep,
Or winged on God's errands shall soar through the
roar of the fathomless deep,
When the lightning is brightening our course and the
thunder-clouds roll in our face,—
For the soul that is pure shall endure when the planets
have crumbled in space.

Ye tempests that sweep from the deep which the
night and the light overspan,

Assemble in splendour and render the praise of
magnificent Man ;
In his hands are the sands of the ages, and gold of
unperishing youth,
On his brow, even now, is the shining of wisdom and
justice and truth ;
His dower was the power to prevail, on the lion and
dragon he trod,
His birth was of earth but he mounts to a throne in
the bosom of God.

THE SPRITE

A LITTLE sprite sat on a moonbeam,
When the night was waning away,
And over the world to the eastward
Spread the first faint flush of the day.
The moonbeam was cold and slippery,
And a fat little fairy was he ;
Around him the white clouds were sleeping,
And under him slumbered the sea.

Then the old moon looked out of her left eye,
And laughed when she thought of the fun,
For she knew that the moonbeam he sat on
Would soon melt away in the sun ;
So she gave a slight shrug of her shoulders,
And winked at a bright little star—
The moon was remarkably knowing,
As old people always are.

‘ Great Madam,’ then answered the fairy,
‘ No doubt you are mightily wise,
And know probably more than another
Of the ins and the outs of the skies.
But to think that we don’t in our own way
An interest in sky-things take,
Is a common and fatal blunder
That sometimes you great ones make.

THE SPRITE

' For I 've looked up from under the heather,
And watched you night after night,
And marked your silent motion,
And the fall of your silvery light.
I have seen you grow larger and larger,
I have watched you fade away ;
I have seen you turn pale as a snowdrop
At the sudden approach of day.

' So don't think for a moment, great Madam,
Though a poor little body I be,
That I haven't my senses about me,
Or am going to drop into the sea.
I have had what you only could give me—
A pleasant night ride in the sky ;
But a new power arises to eastward,
So now, useless old lady, good-bye.'

He whistled a low, sweet whistle,
And up from the earth so dark,
With its wings bespangled with dewdrops,
There bounded a merry lark.
He 's mounted the tiny singer,
And soared through the heavens away,
With his face all aglow in the morning,
And a song for the rising day.

THE POET'S SONG

I HID in the world and sang,
And I sang so loud and long
That all the ages rang
With the music of my song.

I sang of the earth and sky,
I sang of the whispering seas,
I sang of the mountains high,
And I sang of the flowers and trees ;

I sang of the early spring,
I sang of the dawning day,
I sang, for I had to sing
As the young lambs have to play,

Till heaven and earth were ringing,
And all the people heard,
And they said, ' We love his singing,
For his song is the song of the bird.'

ESTRANGEMENT

Do you remember how, one autumn night,
We sat upon the rocks and watched the sea
In dreamlike silence while the moonlight fell
On you and me ?

How, as we lingered musing, side by side,
A cold, white mist crept down and hid the sea
And dimmed the moon, and how the air grew chill
Round you and me ?

The mist and chill of that drear autumn night,
When we sat silent looking on the sea,
I often think has never passed away
From you and me.

SONG'S ETERNITY

LITTLE bird on dewy wing
In the dawn of day,
All the pretty songs you sing
Pass away.
For although man's heart is stirred
By your happy voice,
You can only sing one word,—
'Rejoice,' 'Rejoice.'

But the music poets make
Is a deathless strain,
For they do from sorrow take,
And from pain,
Such a sweetness as imparts
Joy that never dies,—
And their songs live in men's hearts
Beyond the skies.

LOVE SLIGHTED

LOVE built a chamber in my heart,
A daintier ne'er was seen ;
'Twas filled with books and gems of art
And all that makes a lover's part
True homage to his queen.

The ceiling was of silver bright
That showed the floor below ;
The walls were hung with silk so white
That e'en the mirror was to sight
A slope of driven snow.

Then Love threw open wide the door,
And sang, as in a dream,
A song as sweet as bird can pour
Above the sunlight-marbled floor
Of some clear forest stream.

He sang of youth that ne'er grows old,
Of flowers that ne'er decay,
Of wine whose sweetness is not told,
Of honour bright, and courage bold,
And faith more fair than they.

And many a maiden passed me by,
Though some would hear and start,
But thought the singing was so high
It came from somewhere in the sky,
And not from my poor heart.

So years have come and years have flown
Adown the sunset hill,
But Love still sits and sings alone,
And, though his voice has sweeter grown,
My heart is empty still.

LOST LOVE

LOVE has gone a-straying,
Like a cloud in May,
Down the silent wind-ways,
Past the bounds of day.
When will he return again ?
When will his fire burn again ?
I am broken-hearted
Since sweet Love departed.

Love has gone a-straying—
Call him back to me,
Up the silent wind-ways,
Over land and sea.
Tell him he must bring again
Joys that I can sing again ;
I am broken-hearted
Since sweet Love departed.

Love has gone a-straying,
Foolish, foolish Love,
Seeking up the wind-ways
For the stars above ;
Tell him here are flowers as fair,
Tell him here are hours as rare,
While the earth is dressed in spring
And the merry birds do sing,

And the brooks and rivers run
Laughing at the staid old sun ;
Call Love home again,
Bid him not roam again,—
I am broken-hearted
Since sweet Love departed.

BURIED LOVE

BURIED LOVE

LOVE hath built himself a house
Underneath the snow,
Where, amid the winter's storm,
He can keep his body warm,
When the winds do blow.

It is lined with leaves that fell
Half a year ago,
And around it linger yet
Odours of spring violet,
Underneath the snow.

If you come and try to peep
Into what's below,
Laughing loud, as if in fun,
Love jumps up and makes you run,
Pelting you with snow.

What does Love do night and day ?
Would you like to know ?
In the dark he sits and weeps
For a little maid that sleeps—
Sleeps beneath the snow.

And when Spring shall come again
And the warm winds blow,
Tears have made his sight so dim
That the world will seem to him
Buried still in snow.

MUTE LOVE

Love was wanting songs to sing
On a golden day,
When the earth was bright with Spring
And the flowers of May.

So he lay beside the brink
Of a quiet stream,
Where the cattle go to drink
And the clouds to dream.

Sunbeams lit the woods around,
Breezes fanned his cheek,
And the blossoms on the ground
Almost seemed to speak.

In the branches overhead
Robin sang his love,
And the tender things he said
Filled the skies above.

Flitting through the scented air
Where the stream was bright,
Little flies went here and there,
Crazy with delight.

But though all were bright and glad,
Silent was Love's lute,
For such happiness he had
That his lips were mute.

MUTE LOVE

So he lay there in the grass
By the quiet stream,
And he watched the cattle pass
And the shadows dream.

Till when evening, dumb and grey,
Closed the buds that had uncurled,
Full of song he stole away
Down the music of the world.

LOVE'S FOOTPRINTS

LOVE once wandered on the shore
Where these lonely mountains stand,
And the surf for evermore
Whitens down the waste of sand.

Here are footprints ! see, he went
By the sea's edge in his play ;
Here perchance his bow was bent,
And his target was the spray.

There he stooped and wrote his name—
Straggling letters by the tide—
And when sunset bursts in flame
Over shore and mountain-side,

Brightly will the letters glow,
Golden will those footprints be,
Made by young Love long ago
As he wandered by the sea.

LOVELORN

LOVE met a swain that drove his load,
When evening shades were falling,
And in the trees above the road
The rooks were loudly calling.

He sauntered by his lumbering cart,
A simple swain and burly,
Ill formed to play a lover's part,
His manners coarse and surly.

He did not see the autumn gold
That strewed the leafy alley,
He cared not for the tints untold
That lit the sunset valley.

His buskins were all grey with dust,
His smock was black and gritty ;
Though in his mouth a pipe was thrust,
He hummed a country ditty.

' Good morrow, gentle sir,' said Love,
' I fear you 'll count me stupid,'
(The rooks laughed in the trees above—
They knew the voice of Cupid).

' I 've lost my way, good sir, to-night,
And don't know where to find it ;
You see that hill that fades from sight,
My house lies just behind it.

' O, good sir, as your heart is true,
Take pity on my sorrow ;
Let me to-night go home with you,
And I will leave to-morrow.'

The swain, content a friend to see,
Though wishing he were older,
' Get up, my little man,' quoth he,
And perched him on his shoulder.

Ah me ! how sweet that evening walk,
With young Love softly smiling
Upon his arm, and with fair talk
The weary hours beguiling.

Poor swain, he saw with wondering eyes
The valley filled with splendour,
And in the love-light of the skies
His heart grew soft and tender.

But on the morrow Love had gone,
Since then he comes back never ;
The simple heart he rested on
Now aches and aches for ever.

TO A FLY IN WINTER

Good day, little Fly,
Here we are—you and I,
 The children of summer ;
Warm your wings at the fire,
Take what food you desire,
Your lordship I 'll hire
 As my fifer and drummer.

Outside the winds blow,
And the fast falling snow
 From the gables is drifting ;
The clouds seem to me
Like an overturned sea
Lashing field, fence, and tree,
 Never breaking or lifting.

Tune up, little Friend,
Tell me winter will end,
 And the spring-time is coming ;
When the buds with surprise
Will rub their young eyes
And look up to the skies,
 At thy fifing and drumming.

Sing me carols of May,
And of June and the hay,
 With the sweet-smelling clover ;

Of the soft winds that creep
Round my bed as I sleep,
When the dawn lights the deep,
And the long night is over.

Sing me songs of the brook
Where the little fish look
Up, with eyes full of wonder,
At the wind-shaken screen
Of the willows that lean
Over pools that are green
As the boughs they sleep under.

Tune up, little Friend,
For the winter will end,—
Be my fifer and drummer ;
And thy one song repeat,
Till its buzz and the heat
Give my dreaming the sweet
Taste of meadows and summer.

SUNRISE

O RISING Sun, so fair and gay,
What are you bringing me, I pray,
Of sorrow or of joy to-day ?

You look as if you meant to please,
Reclining in your gorgeous ease
Behind the bare-branched apple-trees.

The world is rich and bright, as though
The pillows where your head is low
Had lit the fields of driven snow.

The hoar-frost on the window turns
Into a wood of giant ferns
Where some great conflagration burns.

And all my childhood comes again
As lightsome and as free from stain
As those frost-pictures on the pane.

I would that I could mount on high
And meet you, Sun—that you and I
Had to ourselves the whole wide sky.

But here my poor soul has to stay,
So tell me, rising Sun, I pray,
What are you bringing me to-day ?

What shall this busy brain have thought,
What shall these hands and feet have wrought,
What sorrows shall the hours have brought,

Before thy brilliant course is run,
Before this new-born day is done,
Before you set, O rising Sun ?

TO —

WITH A COPY OF PALGRAVE'S 'GOLDEN TREASURY'

WITH silvery moonlight for a lamp,
And minstrelsy of mountain streams,
This book will fill the lonely camp
With richest harvesting of dreams.

April 27, 1909.

THE CHARCOAL-BURNER

BENEATH this frowning cliff, upon whose crest
The mountain eagle yearly builds her nest,
The Charcoal-Burner hath his modest hut,
With friendly door that is but seldom shut.

Here day by day the early-rising sun
Finds the grim worker with his task begun ;
And curling up the mountains, coil on coil,
Floats pungent incense from his honest toil.

MY GARDEN

My garden shows no bright array
Of rich exotics in its beds,
But little sunbeams in it play,
And leafy maples lift their heads.

The walks but scanty labour get,
No skilful hands their borders trim,
But when the grass with dew is wet
And distant hills are growing dim,

A quiet beauty round me falls,
Wherein all imperfections hide,
And darkness builds her nunnery walls
Between me and the world outside.

Then on the stone seat, looking far
Into the distance o'er the vale,
I watch the friendly evening star
Grow brighter as the sky grows pale.

Strange little people round me sleep,
The ants that have so active been
Now in the sand their vigil keep
Around the chambers of their queen.

The gentle birds are warm and still,
Tucked in their nests among the trees,
While sweetest thoughts their dreaming fill
In the soft rocking of the breeze.

TIME'S DEFEAT

And patient worms that ere the day
Will push their noses through the soil,
Now gather all the strength they may
To aid them for the morrow's toil.

Haply a toad hops now and then
Across the flagstones at my feet,
To tell me that not only men
Have found that darkness is most sweet.

So in my garden night and day,
With sunshine or with stars above,
God takes my petty cares away,
And fills me with His perfect love.

TIME'S DEFEAT

TIME said to me in scorn,
' I was, ere thou wast born.'
' But I,' I quick replied,
' Shall be, when thou hast died.'

MEMORY

O GOLDEN Gates of Memory,
The sun is burning low,
Unlock thy bars and let me see
The ghost-forms come and go.

Ye shadowy faces from the past,
I once could hear you speak ;
My arms around your forms were cast,
I kissed you on the cheek.

Your laughter rang into my brain,
I felt your spirit's fire ;
Ye knew the rack of human pain,
The rapture of desire.

And somewhere through the realms of space
Ye wander unconfined,
But now ye take for dwelling-place
The chambers of the mind.

Dear faces, once so bright and fair,
Ye come from buried years—
Old faces, grey with human care,
Child faces wet with tears.

I pluck the flowers of early days,
I smell the breath of spring,
The woods are thrilling with the lays
Of dead birds carolling.

A MASTER MASON

But now a wind begins to moan,
I hear the sob of waves,
And lo, I wander all alone
Across a land of graves.

O Golden Gates of Memory,
Be shut ! The sun has set,
And night-clouds roll up from the sea ;
O, let my heart forget.

A MASTER MASON

With honest hands, he toiled from morn till night,
The plumb his gauge of truth, the square, of right.

No dreams had he, no visions strange and dim,
And schools and logic they were nought to him.

He found his God in a much simpler way,
Even by doing his duty day by day,

When in the burning sun or welcome shade,
Mid dust and noise, he plied his noble trade.

For as each stone into its place would slip,
God smiled on him in sweet companionship.

' IN TE, DOMINE '

THE hills may crumble into dust,
The earth may swallow up the sea,
But naught can shake my living trust
In Him whose firm hands moulded me.

For when I draw myself apart
From things which make my vision dim,
Deep in the silence of my heart
He meets me, and I speak with Him.

GUILTY

A SUDDEN flash of heat,
A sudden sharp word said,
And at his guilty feet
The thing called love lay dead.

VAN ELSEN

GOD spake three times and saved Van Elsen's soul ;
He spake by sickness first and made him whole ;
Van Elsen heard Him not,
Or soon forgot.

God spake to him by wealth, the world outpoured
Its treasures at his feet, and called him Lord ;
Van Elsen's heart grew fat
And proud thereat.

God spake the third time when the great world smiled,
And in the sunshine slew his little child ;
Van Elsen like a tree
Fell hopelessly.

Then in the darkness came a Voice which said,
' As thy heart bleedeth, so My heart hath bled,
As I have need of thee,
Thou needest Me.'

That night Van Elsen kissed the baby feet,
And kneeling by the narrow winding-sheet,
Praised Him with fervent breath
Who conquered death.

IN MEMORIAM

JAMES WILLIAM WILLIAMS, LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC

To those found faithful, oft the call to rest
Comes in the glory of the later noon,
Ere evening falls and with declining day
The mind has darkened and work lost its zest.
So now, though first our sad hearts cried ' Too soon,'
We see God's angel did in heavenly way
His finished work and Master's love attest.
And now he wins, withdrawn from human eye,
A good man's two-fold immortality,
To live for ever near the Master's throne,
And here, in lives made better by his own.

April 20, 1892.

AN ODE

WHAT boots it to be great ?
To live in royal state
And feast with kings,
Since now all things
One doom await ?
What boots it to be fair ?
Sweet eyes and golden hair,
And youthful bloom,
Since in the tomb
All foulness there ?
To live in royal state—
That is not to be great ;
Sweet eyes and golden hair—
That is not to be fair.

What is it to be great ?
Content with thine estate,
To serve thy God and King
In everything—
That is it to be great.

What is it to be fair ?
Sweet modesty to wear,
To keep thine honour sure,
Thy bosom pure—
That is it to be fair.
Much boots it to be great,
Much boots it to be fair.

A NOCTURNE

IN the little French church at the bend of the river,
When rainy and loud was the wind in the night,
An altar-lamp burnt to the mighty Grace-giver,
The Holy Child Jesus—the Light of the Light.

It was hung on a chain from the roof, and was swinging,
As if the unseemly commotion to chide,
Like the choir-master's baton when hushing the
singing,
Or the tongue of the bell when its tollings subside.

It lit up the poor paper flowers on the altar,
And odd were the shadows it scattered around
On pulpit and lectern, on choir-seat and psalter,
While the chains threw the ghost of a cross on
the ground.

The people at home in their cabins were sleeping,
The curé was tucked in his four-posted bed ;
While under the willows the river was creeping
As if silent with fear of the wind overhead.

But the little dark church had its own congregation—
The shadows that swayed on the pews and the
floor—
While the rafters that creaked were a choir whose
laudation
Had an organ for base in the hurricane's roar.

A NOCTURNE

The rusty gilt cock on the *flèche* was the preacher,
And scolding and grumpy his voice was to hear,
As he turned to the storm like some faithful old teacher
Who prophesies hard things regardless of fear.

But the service reflected the state of the weather,
For though each, I must say, did his part with a will,
The preacher and choir spoke and sang all together,
And the shapes on the benches would never sit still.

Yet there was the Host, in the midst of the altar,
Where that little red curtain of damask was hung,—
The God whom King David has praised in the psalter,
And to whom the whole choir of the ages has sung.

But so big is the heart of our God, the Life-giver,
That in it life's humour and pathos both meet ;
So I doubt not that night in the church by the river,
The poor old storm's service to Him sounded sweet.

DESTINY

THEY loved in youth and parted, and for years
He worshipped at her shrine through hopes and fears.

The fruits of exile 'neath an alien sky
Were garnered for an offering by-and-by ;

And all the strong endeavours of the man
Were shaped and moulded to a single plan.

They met years after in the public ways,
And talked as others might of bygone days ;

And he, ere that day's sun died down in flame,
Set sail once more for lands from whence he came.

There, till the end, he lived a life apart,
Still worshipping the image in his heart.

UNDER THE PINES

' LIFE is sad,' says the wind in the pines
 To the still soul listening,
While the pale, pale day declines
 Like a white bird on the wing.

' Life is sad,' says the quiet earth
 Under the churchyard wall,
Where the spring flowers have their birth
 And the autumn leaflets fall.

' Life is sad,' say the daisies that blow there
 And stretch out their heads to the sun ;
' Life is sad,' say the poor hearts that go there
 To weep when the day's work is done.

' Life is sad,' from below, from on high,
 From forest and meadow and tree,
From the clouds that drift over the sky
 And the days that die into the sea.

Then up and be brave with thy sorrow,
 Like a man with his face to the blast ;
Not from hope of the joys of to-morrow,
 Nor rest when the warfare is past ;

But strong that weak souls may grow strong,
 That men may take heart by the way,
Till the heavens break forth with the song
 That will herald eternal day.

THE TWO MISTRESSES

AH, woe is me, my heart 's in sorry plight,
Enamoured equally of Wrong and Right ;

 Right hath the sweeter grace,
 But Wrong the prettier face :

Ah, woe is me, my heart 's in sorry plight.

And Right is jealous that I let Wrong stay ;
Yet Wrong seems sweeter when I turn away.

 Right sober is, like Truth,
 But Wrong is in her youth :

So Right is jealous that I let Wrong stay.

When I am happy, left alone with Right,
Then Wrong flits by and puts her out of sight ;

 I follow and I fret,
 And once again forget

That I am happy, left alone with Right.

Ah, God ! do Thou have pity on my heart !
A puppet blind am I, take Thou my part !

 Chasten my wandering love,
 Set it on things above :

Ah, God ! do Thou take pity on my heart !

IN THE WOODS

THIS is God's house—the blue sky is the ceiling,
This wood the soft, green carpet for His feet,
Those hills His stairs, down which the brooks come
stealing,
With baby laughter making earth more sweet.

And here His friends come, clouds and soft winds
sighing,
And little birds whose throats pour forth their love,
And spring and summer, and the white snow lying
Pencilled with shadows of bare boughs above.

And here come sunbeams through the green leaves
straying,
And shadows from the storm-clouds overdrawn,
And warm, hushed nights, when mother earth is
praying
So late that her moon-candle burns till dawn.

Sweet house of God, sweet earth so full of pleasure,
I enter at thy gates in storm or calm ;
And every sunbeam is a joy and treasure,
And every cloud a solace and a balm.

BY THE SEA

EVER the strong, salt life, ever the dream,
Ever the pulsing force, the mystery
Of tireless Nature working 'neath the stars
Her destiny apart from human things.

SONG

(From the Italian of Guarini)

WHEN the leaves are falling, Dearest,
And you seek the quiet mound
Where I slumber, you will find it
With a wealth of blossoms crowned.

Gather, then, for thy bright tresses
Those that from my heart have sprung ;
They're the love-thoughts that I spoke not,
And the songs I left unsung.

JEHORAM

(2 Chron. xxi.)

NOT in kings' chambers
 Make his last bed,
Not with his fathers
 Lay ye the dead :
Reeking from murders,
 Leprous and foul,
Give him for mourners
 Vulture and owl.

God set the crown on,
 God made him man,
He coaxed the brute up,
 Breaking God's plan,
Married to murder
 Lusting for lust,
Out went the life-spark
 Leaving mere dust.

Through the rich vineyards
 Blows the hot breeze,
Laden with rose-breath
 Noisy with bees ;
Here where his footsteps
 Blasted the earth,
Justice shall triumph,
 Freedom have birth.

Cleanse ye the throne-room,
Wash the stained crown,
Make straight the sceptre,
Throw the gods down ;
From the rich pavements
Rub each dark blot,
Those wildly-staring
Eyes see you not.

Throw wide the palace,
Let the sun in,
Let the winds fill it,
Purge out the sin,
Ghosts and all shadows
Drive far away,
Fill it with bird-songs,
Flood it with day.

Burn the soft couches,
Throw out the wine,
These turned to devil
What was divine.
Silence that laughter
Born of the tomb,
It is the death-knell
Tolling man's doom.

Rise, slumbering people,
Cast out your dead,
Darkness shall shroud him,
Earth be his bed,
Till the lean wolf-dogs
Make him their feast,
Who, though God crowned him,
Chose to be beast.

ON THE CLIFF

I SEE the great blue ocean kiss the sky
Far to the South, I hear the sea-gulls wail
Among the crags, while, underneath, the sail
Goes swiftly by.

The sun looks down upon the twinkling sea ;
I hear the waters breaking far below ;
And all is joyous, save the cloud of woe
That hangs o'er me.

The loving sky can ever kiss the sea,
The ripple and the zephyr never part ;
Then why—oh, why—should thy sweet loving heart
Be torn from me ?

VICTORY

ON a battlefield confined
By the four walls of a mind,
Two great spirits, stern and strong,
Battled fiercely—Right and Wrong.

Sometimes Wrong with sudden thrust
Threw Right headlong in the dust ;
Then would Right with might and main
Shake his foe and rise again.

Years and years the battle raged,
And the man grew bent and aged ;
Till at last, his time being o'er,
Death came knocking at the door.

‘ Let me in,’ the angel said,
‘ God hath sent me, have no dread ;
For the fight so well maintained
Endless rest on high hath gained.’

‘ LABOR INSTANS ’

RUDE Labour, toiling on through hopeless night,
Naked and starved, scorn heaped upon his head,
Now rises in his strength with sword to smite,
And asks the nations for his daily bread.

TOWARDS EVENING

Now more than half the day is done,
So let us loiter down the hill,
With faces towards the setting sun,
And hearts contented to be still.

The love that made the morn so bright
Is with us now that daylight dies,
And shall be with us when the night
Has drawn her curtain o'er the skies.

So very sweet the past hath been,
We cannot bear to let it go ;
And yet from all that we have seen,
Life's flowers get richer as they grow.

A deeper pleasure comes with years
In all the simple things of life,
There is less bitterness in tears,
Less tumult in the heart of strife.

The daily scenes in which we dwell
Become infused with tenderer grace,
And powers of consolation dwell
In every change on Nature's face.

The coming of the winter snow,
The blossoms of the early spring,
Can set the spirit all aglow,
And make the heart rejoice and sing.

And when against the window-pane
The mist has made a curtain dim,
The beating of the summer rain
Is sweet and solemn as a hymn.

For then from out the chambered past
The spirit faces come and go,
And overhead the clouded vast
Is noisy with the winds that blow.

Thus God comes knocking at the door,
And makes our hearts within us burn,
For asking from us more and more,
He gives more richly in return.

The golden sun now sets apace,
And stars look downward from the deep,
There cometh in a little space,
The folding of the hands to sleep.

THE SKYLARK'S MESSAGE

SWEET little upturned faces,
 Poor little hands and feet,
Little eyes that are careworn and anxious
 From hunger and want in the street,
Hear ye that skylark singing
 Like an angel far away ?
'Tis bringing to you a message
 From the golden gates of day.

Ah, little know ye of the meadows,
 Poor little blistered feet,
Down in the smoke of the city,
 Down in the noise of the street !
But it sings of a better country,
 Where tired little hearts can rest ;
Of a sun that shines for ever,
 And the love of a Father's breast.

O poor little weary spirits,
 I would that you knew its song,
For the world is very heartless,
 And your journey may be long ;
And ye need such heavenly music
 To cheer you in the night,
Little hearts that are now so noble,
 Little souls that are now so white.

I would that ye heard it always,
That sweet bird's voice within,
When the heart is sad and lonely
In the long, long struggle with sin ;
Till a rest comes out of the sunset
For the labouring hands and feet,
And a silence has fallen for ever
On the noise and the dust of the street.

LONDON, 1883.

ISOLATION

A SONG AT SUNSET

THERE 's a lonely spot in the soul of man,
More lone than the moonless sea ;
And a gulf, that never a bridge can span,
'Tween him and all that be ;
And the lips we kiss, and the eyes we love,
And the glory of golden hair,
Melt like the stars in the mist above,
And shed no sunlight there.

There 's a weary voice in the soul of man
That cries for the great ' to be,'
Like the moan of the worlds when time began,
Or the wail of the wind by the sea ;
And only the fall of the faded leaf
And the sigh of the night in the trees,
Can utter the spirit's lonely grief
And the sorrow that no one sees.

A MOOD

As some great cloud upon a mountain's breast,
Hanging for ever, shutteth out the sun,
Its chilly fingers twining in the trees
And blighting them, so ever one dark thought
Broods o'er my life and makes my spirit droop
Beneath its baleful shade. A demon form
Is ever at my side, whose icy touch
Freezes my warmest thoughts, and makes them hang
Like dull, cold icicles about my heart.
I feel his presence 'mid my fellow-men ;
I see his image in the restless sea
That gnaws the land ; and on the towering top,
Where everything is still, amid the rocks,
Worn bald by fleeting years, I hear his tread.
I see his footsteps in the lonely wild,
Where forests ever spring and ever die ;
But, most of all, I feel him near at night,
When all the world is shrouded in the gloom
Of dreamful Sleep,—so like his brother Death.
I see his eyeballs on the glittering sky ;
I hear his laughter ringing from the stars,
That look at me and say, ' O helpless worm,
Upon a world of worms, dost thou not know
The dust thou treadest in was once like thee,
And laughed its laugh, and had its time to weep,
And now lies helpless, trampled on, forgot,
Scattered upon thy tiny globe which hangs
Chained to its sun in black infinity ?

That thou—thou, too—must soon be dust again,
Forgotten, helpless, trampled on by those
That shall come after thee ? '

I even hear

His voice amid the voices of my friends,
Harsh, taunting me with death, and dreams of death.
And, when I gaze in rapture on the face
Of whom I love, he casts a hideous light,
That lets me see, behind the sweet, warm flesh,
The lightless skull, and o'er the rounded form
The shades of death, aye dark and darker growing,
Until the life-light melts into the night.
Oh, would that I could break the curséd chain
That binds this monster to me ! for my life
Is like some gloomy valley that lies chill
Beneath a frowning precipice. And yet
The thread of gloom is woven in my being,
And I am loth to rend it, for my thoughts
Have long been shaded by it. Ever since
I first could play, I used to watch the boys,
So joyous in their sports, and saw them men,
Grown chilly-hearted in a chilly world,
Grown weary with the burden of their life,
All restless, seeking rest yet finding change ;
And then I saw the gathering shadows lower
Upon the evening of their life, and then
They merged into the dark, and all was still—
Dust under dust, forgotten by the world
In ugly loathsomeness.

The demon still

Was at my side in after-years, and threw
A shade on every friendship, as a cloud
Floats past the sun and dims the flowering fields.
Oft have I wondered at the woodland stream
That dances on, through dapple-lighted woods,

O'er mossy pebbles glinting in the sun,
Like eyes of merry children round the fire,
And never seems to think that it must thread
The misty fen, where every flower grows rank
Amid the lazy ooze, and sink at last
Beneath the boundless sea. Oh, happy they,
Who thus go laughing on from year to year,
And never know the mystery of being,
And never start and shudder at the dream
That they and all mankind are dreaming—Life,
And strive to wake, but fall back helplessly ;
Who fancy sunlight, when the sky is dark,
And never know that time, like India's snake,
Enwraps us with his gaudy-coloured folds
Of changing seasons, till his dread embrace
Has crushed out life ; who live, and laugh, and weep,
And tread the dust of myriads underfoot,
And see men die around them, yet whose life,
The demon form that stalks beside my path,
The consciousness of never-ending change,
Has never darkened, as it darkens mine,
Beneath the shadow of the wing of Death.

March 1882.

THE STING OF DEATH

‘ Is Sin, then, fair ? ’
Nay, love, come now,
Put back the hair
From his sunny brow ;
See, here, blood-red
Across his head
A brand is set,
The word—‘ Regret.’

‘ Is Sin so fleet
That while he stays,
Our hands and feet
May go his ways ? ’
Nay, love, his breath
Clings round like death,
He slakes desire
With liquid fire.

‘ Is Sin Death’s sting ? ’
Ay, sure he is,
His golden wing
Darkens man’s bliss ;
And when Death comes,
Sin sits and hums
A chaunt of fears
Into man’s ears.

‘ How slayeth Sin ? ’
First, God is hid,
And the heart within
By its own self chid ;
Then the maddened brain
Is scourged by pain
To sin as before
And more and more,
For evermore.

'TE JUDICE'

Dost thou deem that thyself
Art as white from sin
As a platter of delf,—
Outside and in ?
When thine eyes behold
Christ's kind face lean
From His throne of gold
To test what is told
Of the life that hath been,
Like a leper of old,
Thou wilt cry, ' Unclean !
Unclean ! Unclean ! '

And thinkest thou this—
That thou judgest aright
Thy heart as it is
In God's and man's sight ?
Fool, take up thy light,
And descend the stair steep
To thy heart's dungeons deep,
And search them and sweep
Till their ghosts are unmasked ;
Else, when judgment is come,
Thou wilt stand stark and dumb
At the first question asked.

THE OLD GARDENER

DEAR Mother Earth, in this long wooden box,
We bring old Michael with his silvery locks ;
Such years he tended thee with pick and spade,
Right gladly wilt thou welcome his poor shade.

A QUESTION

O YE Wise of the Earth, *are ye wise ?*
‘ We can tell from a bone,’ ye say,
‘ An animal’s shape and size,
And the size and shape of its prey.’—
‘ For such and such joint,’ say ye,
‘ For such and such use must be.’
When I show that since time began
The soul hath longed for the skies,
Ye say, ‘ Death is the end of Man.’—
O ye Wise of the Earth, *are ye wise ?*

ON DARWIN'S TOMB IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THE Muse, when asked what words alone
Were worthy tribute to his fame,
Took up her pen, and on the stone
Inscribed his name.

LONDON, 1883.

EPITAPH ON DR. JENNER

IN sterner fight than Waterloo
He saved his hapless brothers ;
Not by his own arm, it is true,
But by the arms of others.

1886.

THE SNOWSTORM

THE sky is hid in a snowy shroud,
And the road in the woods is white,
But the dear God watches above the cloud
In the centre of light.

In the woods is the hush of the snowflakes' fall,
And the creak of a lumberman's sleigh,
But in Heaven the choirs of the Master of all
Make praise alway.

Up there is the throne of the Triune God
And the worshipping multitudes,
And here is the long white winter road
And the silent woods.

THE WINDMILL

A LITTLE toy windmill is turning,
Perched up on the roof of the shed,
Beyond it the sunset is burning,
And the limitless woods are outspread.

It knows not the winds that are blowing,
It asks not the clouds what they are,
While the gold of the sunset is going,
And over it looks out a star.

But alas for the hearts that are weary,
For as the night settles apace,
To the poor human spirit how dreary
And cold looks the starland of space.

THE NIGHT-WIND

WHERE the huge clouds part,
A voice from God's heart
Saith unto me,
 In accents clear :
‘ Who hath eyes, let him see ;
 Who hath ears, let him hear.’

The wind with delight
Shakes the mantle of night,
 And roars through the trees
 With the voice of the seas ;
And it saith to my mind :
‘ Some day thou shalt find
 Thy home in the deep,
 When death wakes thee from sleep.’

LEO XIII

SERVANT of God, of thee the world had need,
 For this thy glory, this thy triple crown,
Thy soul from out its battlemented creed
 Glowed with that love which melts all barriers
 down.

JACK

You 'RE only a dumb little dog, Jack,
About ten or twelve pounds or so,
And your wits must be all in a fog, Jack,
If you have any wits, I know.

But you 've two such soft brown eyes, Jack,
And such long grey silky hair ;
And, what very much more I prize, Jack,
Such a warm little heart in there.

They say warm hearts are rare, Jack,
And I almost believe that it 's true ;
But there aren't many hearts can compare, Jack,
With that staunch little heart in you.

Of course, we that speak and can read, Jack,
Have plenty of friendships sweet ;
But, in spite of them all, there 's a need, Jack,
For a friend like the friend at my feet.

This planet must seem a queer place, Jack,
To your poor little limited mind ;
For I fancy you never can trace, Jack,
The reasons for half that you find.

You 're not bothered with questions like us, Jack,
About forces and morals and laws ;
And you never get worried or fuss, Jack,
When you cannot discover a cause.

But you go your own little way, Jack,
With a wag of the tail for a friend ;
And in spite of our talk, I dare say, Jack,
That we don't do much more in the end.

1888.

THE ABBOT

A WANING moon was in the sky
And many a still cloud floated by,
With outline dark the abbey stood
Fronting a line of wood.

With bowed head on the chapel stone
The Abbot knelt for hours alone,
While round him coloured moonbeams threw
Rose-work of richest hue.

A tiny altar-lamp burnt dim,
And lit the sculptured seraphim
Which fringed the choir with faces bent
Before the Sacrament.

The place was still as in a dream,
So very still, the ear did seem
To catch the voice of years gone by,
And long dead harmony.

The abbey clock above struck three,
The Abbot rose from bended knee,
His face was greyer than the stone,
His eyes were woe-begone.

He passed into the cloister dim,
The night-air brought no balm to him,
What anguish made his senses reel,
Christ could not heal ?

He entered at an iron grate,
The halls within were desolate ;
Like one who waketh from a spell,
 He halted at a cell.

Therein upon a pallet bed,
With bars of moonlight on his head,
While winds through ivied mullions creep,
 A fair-haired boy did sleep.

Outside an owl did hoot and call
And drown the Abbot's light foot-fall,
But rustle of those garments sere
 In dreams the boy did hear.

' Hush, boy,'tis I,' the Abbot said,
' Thy pure soul to the rescued dead
Shall bear my message ; life is past,
 Hell's meshes hold me fast.

' Was thy sleep sweet ? my sleep is o'er,
One speaks to thee who never more
Shall look on man (God send us grace),
 Nor ever see God's face.'

The boy through fear sat bolt upright
In tongueless terror, for moonlight
Smote slanting on the face and eye,
 Which worked convulsively.

' One burden, boy, a weight of years,
Full to the brim of hopeless tears,
Hath crushed me, bearing round my brain
 The double brand of Cain.

‘ Thy life and hopes are all before,
And mine are passed for evermore ;
My secret in the years to come
Remember, but be dumb.

‘ O God, my heart beats loud within,
I slew my brother in mortal sin,
I stabbed him twice, not knowing, to free
A maiden’s chastity.’

The Abbot stood erect and tall,
His shadow fell along the wall,—
God save him, as if seeking grace,
He hid his cowléd face.

‘ A black snake slipt across my feet,
Above bare boughs did part and meet,
There was a motion in the air
And eyes watched everywhere.

‘ The deed was done in distant lands,
But his blood dabbled these same hands,
And under trees where pale stars shine
His eyes looked into mine.

‘ One look from those dead eyes of his,
And love rushed back to him ; was this
The climax of his life who seemed
The king my boyhood dreamed ?

‘ Shall sin and shall not love endure ?—
Love grounded in the past and pure,
Man’s love for man, for angels fit,
Could one act shatter it ? ’

The boy sat upright, pale as death,
 A numbness stole away his breath,
 The fascination of the eye,
 Which moved convulsively.

‘ I fled at sunrise down the bay
 To where a mystic island lay,
 Dazed with the cloudless arch of sky
 And waves’ monotony.

‘ And here a convent open stood,
 Where monks sought peace in solitude ;
 I entered with the rest to hide
 Within the Crucified.

‘ I told my woe to one ; he said,—
 “ Under thy feet, and overhead,
 And all around is God. To-night,
 Keep vigil, pray for light.”

‘ That night in cave-shrine, visions three
 God and the Virgin sent to me ;
 Four angels fenced the cavern’s mouth
 With locked wings, north and south.

‘ Thrice darkness fell, and thrice I lay
 Low-poised above a sea, no day
 Lit up its shoreless waves, no night
 Shut distance from the sight.

‘ No fish leaped up, no God looked down,
 No sound there was, I strove to drown,—
 Ere waves were touched a wind did spring,
 And bore me on its wing.

‘ My blood stood still and thick as ice,
 And thought held thought, as in a vice,
 The ages died, no death did bless
 The death of nothingness.

‘ Each time the soul did undergo
 The torture of a separate woe,
 The demon fangs insatiate,
 Of doubt, despair and hate.

‘ I woke and told the monk my dreams ;
 His voice was sad, he said, “ Meseems
 No part one slain in his soul’s blood
 Shall have in Holy Rood.

‘ “ But brother,” said the agéd man,
 “ God works by many a diverse plan,
 And once vicarious agony
 Saved souls on Calvary.

‘ “ I know not but, with God in heaven,
 Some grace to lost souls may be given ;
 By fasts and scourgings, prayers and pains,
 Loose thou thy brother’s chains.”

‘ Yea, boy, have I not prayed to Heaven ?
 Has not life spoilt with bitter leaven
 And fasts and scourgings, night and day,
 The blood-guilt burnt away ?

‘ But ever from the throat of hell
 There booms a fearful passing-bell
 Of one, once slain in his soul’s blood,
 Cast out from Holy Rood.

‘ The passions of the full-grown man
Concentre where his life began ;
The boy’s love is not manifold,
It grips with single hold.

‘ The boyhood’s love is part of us,
No power can wrench it out, and thus
Love chained me to him in the gloom,
And I had wrought his doom.

‘ The thing was with me day by day,
And all my thinking underlay ;
And even through hours when I forgot,
Ached as a canker spot.

‘ My food was ashes in my mouth,
My very soul was seared with drouth,
I banished thought, the struggle vain
Brought back the thought again.

‘ The saints and angels held aloof,
My prayers fell back from chapel roof,
They had no lightness to ascend
Where earth and heaven blend.

‘ The stars did mock me with their peace,
The seasons brought me no release,
Despair and anguish like a sea
And pain were under me.

‘ And year by year more pains I gave,
Till life became a living grave,
Till, like the lost behind hell’s gate,
My soul was desolate.’

THE ABBOT

Outside an owl did hoot and call,
But in the abbey silence all ;
The Abbot's voice had hollow sound,
As if from underground.

' Hush, boy, the fiend came yesternight.'
The Abbot smiled—a gruesome sight,
That smiling face in moonlight wan,
With eyes so woe-begone—

' The fiend came yesternight to ask
The utmost deed that life can task,
A soul by self-death given to win
Another's soul from sin.'

So fearful was the story told,
The boy's teeth chattered as with cold,
He saw no leaf-shapes on the floor,
He heard no bell ring four.

' To-night with head on chapel stone,
I prayed to Him who did atone,
Till blood-sweat ran, as down His face
It ran in garden-place.

' 'Tis done, the earthly fight is o'er,
My soul is dark for evermore,
I am the fiend's, hark ! hear him call—
He holds a soul in thrall.

' I know not if the spirit breath,
Meets spirit on the road of death,
Or falleth like a thin, white thread
Among the under dead.

‘ I know not whether, passing by,
One rapid moment, he and I,
His face upturned to coming crown,
Mine anguished, bending down,

‘ Shall then know all ; but boy, when near
Thy feet approach where tier on tier,
God’s minstrels face the Trinity,
In that place made for me,

‘ But mine no longer, seek thou there
One with thine eyes and golden hair,
Gold as his broidered vesture is,
And say whose soul won his.

‘ Perchance, though there no sorrow dims,
The tears will mount to his eyes’ brims,
And I shall live, his sweetest thought,
For what my love hath wrought.

‘ Again the demon calls, I come.
See, pure boy, let thy lips be dumb,
One last atonement lifts to-night
A lost soul into light.’

He kissed the boy upon the brow ;
‘ Yea, very like to him art thou,
When we sat pure on mother’s knee,
Farewell, eternally.’

The Abbot passed into the gloom,
The moonlight flooded all the room,
The boy sat stark from hour to hour,
Chained by unearthly power.

But lo, when, in the matin time,
The bells rang out the hour of prime,
From cloistered aisle and chapel stair
 A wild cry rent the air.

Not yet quite cold, dead in his blood,
With face averted from the Rood,
The Abbot lay on chapel stone,
 His eyes still woe-begone.

No bell was rung, no mass was said,
They buried the dishonoured dead
Out in the road which crossed the wood,
 In dark and solitude.

They marked the spot with never a stone,
Tree-shadows fell on it alone,
And moss and vines and thin wood grass
 Grew where no feet would pass.

Nathless, it seemed to one fair boy,
The birds did sing with fuller joy,
And angels swung wood incense faint,
 As round the grave of saint.

The tiny altar-lamp burnt dim,
And lit the sculptured seraphim,
And tombs where monks in garments sere
 Were gathered year by year.

But when an old monk came to die,
He spake thus to those standing by :
‘ Out in that spot my grave be set,
 Marked by wood violet.

' No man can judge another's sin,
God only sees without and in,
Wherefore, my brethren, be ye kind,
That was our Master's mind.

' For many are crowned as saints by God
Whose graves unheeding feet have trod ;
Man judges by the outer life,
God by the inner strife.

' Out there the forest tree-roots creep
Round one sad heart's forgotten sleep,
A heart which broke in giving all
To save a soul from thrall.'

A HYMN OF EMPIRE

LORD, by whose might the Heavens stand,
The Source from whence they came,
Who holdest nations in Thy hand,
And call'st the stars by name,
Thine ageless forces do not cease
To mould us as of yore—
The chiselling of the arts of peace,
The anvil-strokes of war.

Then bind our realms in brotherhood,
Firm laws and equal rights,
Let each uphold the Empire's good
In freedom that unites ;
And make that speech whose thunders roll
Down the broad stream of time,
The harbinger from pole to pole
Of love and peace sublime.

Lord, turn the hearts of cowards who prate,
Afraid to dare or spend,
The doctrine of a narrower State
More easy to defend ;
Not this the watchword of our sires
Who breathed with ocean's breath,
Not this our spirit's ancient fires
Which nought could quench but death.

Strong are we ? Make us stronger yet ;
Great ? Make us greater far.
Our feet antarctic oceans fret,
Our crown the polar star ;
Round Earth's wild coasts our batteries speak,
Our highway is the main,
We stand as guardian of the weak,
We burst the oppressor's chain.

Great God, uphold us in our task,
Keep pure and clean our rule,
Silence the honeyed words which mask
The wisdom of the fool.
The pillars of the world are Thine ;
Pour down Thy bounteous grace,
And make illustrious and divine
The sceptre of our race.

CANADA

OUT of the clouds on Time's horizon, dawneth the new Day, spacious and fair :

White-winged over the world it shineth ; wide-winged over the land and sea.

Spectres and ghosts of battles and hatred flee at the touch of the morning air :

Throned on the ocean, the new Sun ariseth ; Darkness is over, we wake, and are free.

Ages of ages guarded and tended mountain and waterfall, river and plain,

Forests, that sighed with the sorrows of God in the infinite night when the stars looked down,—

Guarded and tended with winter and summer, sword of lightning and food of rain,

This, our Land, where the twin-born peoples, youngest of Nations, await their crown.

Now, in the dawn of a Nation's glory, now, in the passionate youth of Time,

Wide-thrown portals, infinite visions, splendours of knowledge, dreams from afar,

Seas, that toss in their limitless fury, thunder of cataracts, heights sublime,

Mock us, and dare us, to do and inherit, to mount up as eagles and grasp at the star.

Blow on us, Breath of the pitiless passion that pulses
and throbs in the heart of the sea !

Smite on us, Wind of the night-hidden Arctic !
breathe on us, Breath of the languorous South !

Here, where ye gather to conflict and triumph, men
shall have manhood, Man shall be free ;

Here hath he shattered the yoke of the tyrant ;
free as the winds are the words of his mouth.

Voice of the infinite solitude, speak to us ! Speak to us,
Voice of the mountain and plain !

Give us the dreams which the lakes are dreaming—
lakes with bosoms all white in the dawn ;

Give us the thoughts of the deep-browed mountains,
thoughts that will make us as gods to reign ;

Give us the calm that is pregnant with action—calm
of the hills when night is withdrawn.

Brothers, who crowd to the golden portals—portals
which God has opened wide—

Shake off the dust from your feet as ye enter ; gird
up your loins, and pass within :

Cringing to no man, go in as brothers ; mount up to
kingship, side by side :

Night is behind us, Day is before us, victories wait
us, heights are to win.

God, then, uplift us ! God, then, uphold us ! Great
God, throw wider the bounds of Man's thought !

Gnaws at our heart-strings the hunger for action ;
burns like a desert the thirst in our soul :

Give us the gold of a steadfast endeavour ; give us
the heights which our fathers have sought :

Though we start last in the race of the Nations,
give us the power to be first at the goal.

THE COLOURS OF THE FLAG

WHAT is the blue on our flag, boys ?

The waves of the boundless sea,
Where our vessels ride in their tameless pride
And the feet of the winds are free ;
From the sun and smiles of the coral isles
To the ice of the South and North,
With dauntless tread through tempests dread
The guardian ships go forth.

What is the white on our flag, boys ?

The honour of our land,
Which burns in our sight like a beacon light
And stands while the hills shall stand ;
Yea, dearer than fame is our land's great name,
And we fight, wherever we be,
For the mothers and wives that pray for the lives
Of the brave hearts over the sea.

What is the red on our flag, boys ?

The blood of our heroes slain
On the burning sands in the wild waste lands
And the froth of the purple main.
And it cries to God from the crimsoned sod
And the crest of the waves outrolled
That He send us men to fight again
As our fathers fought of old.

We 'll stand by the dear old flag, boys,
Whatever be said or done,
Though the shots come fast, as we face the blast,
And the foe be ten to one ;—
Though our only reward be the thrust of a sword
And a bullet in heart or brain,
What matters one gone, if the flag float on
And Britain be lord of the main.

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM

THOSE KILLED IN THE CANADIAN NORTH-
WEST, 1885

GROWING to full manhood now,
With the care-lines on our brow,
We, the youngest of the nations,
With no childish lamentations,
Weep, as only strong men weep,
For the noble hearts that sleep,
Pillooned where they fought and bled,
The loved and lost, our glorious dead !

Toil and sorrow come with age,
Manhood's rightful heritage ;
Toil our arms more strong shall render,
Sorrow make our hearts more tender,
In the heartlessness of time ;
Honour lays a wreath sublime—
Deathless glory—where they bled,
Our loved and lost, our glorious dead !

Wild the prairie grasses wave
O'er each hero's new-made grave ;
Time shall write such wrinkles o'er us,
But the future spreads before us
Glorious in that sunset land—
Nerving every heart and hand,
Comes a brightness none can shed,
But the dead, the glorious dead !

Lay them where they fought and fell ;
Every heart shall ring their knell,
For the lessons they have taught us,
For the glory they have brought us.
Tho' our hearts are sad and bowed,
Nobleness still makes us proud—
Proud of light their names shall shed
In the roll-call of our dead !

Growing to full manhood now,
With the care-lines on our brow,
We, the youngest of the nations,
With no childish lamentations,
Weep, as only strong men weep,
For the noble hearts that sleep
Where the call of duty led,
Where the lonely prairies spread,
Where for us they fought and bled,
Our loved, our lost, our glorious dead !

BRITISH WAR SONG

' WARS and rumours of wars '—the clouds lower over
the sea,
And a man must now be a man, if ever a man can be ;
' Wars and rumours of wars '—a cry from the flaming
East,
For the vultures are gathered together, and the lions
roar over the feast.

War ! Shall we flinch ! Shall we tremble ! Shall we
shrink like cowards from the fray ?

Better all Britons were dead than their glory passed
away !

The clouds may be dark and lowering, the storm may
be loud and long,

But the hearts of our men are true, and the arms of our
men are strong.

From the thousand years of glory, from the grave of
heroes gone,

Comes a voice on the breath of the storm, and a
power that sweeps us on :

A man must now be a man, and every man be true,
For the grave that covers our glory shall cover each
Briton too.

FROM CANADA

MOTHER and Queen, from the golden West
We offer in love at the foot of thy throne
All we can give thee, our dearest and best,
Flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone.
Take them, Queen of the brave and free ;
They come in their love to die for thee.

Mother and Queen, from farm and mart,
From bank and factory, hill and plain,
They gather in love for a noble heart,
To lighten its sorrow and share its pain.
Take them, Queen of the brave and free ;
They come in their love to die for thee.

Mother and Queen, our homes were bright
And pure as the air of the sunlit north ;
But tears have darkened the women's sight
Since the day that the brothers and sons
went forth.
Take them, Queen of the brave and free ;
They come in their love to die for thee.

Mother and Queen of the spotless throne,
Lady and Lord of the sea and land,
Thou makest our far-born sons thine own
By the tender clasp of a woman's hand.
Take them, Queen of the brave and free ;
They come in their love to die for thee.

Mother and Queen, from the strong, glad West,
From the rivers and plains where our children
roam,
We give thee our dearest, our bravest, our best ;
Take them, Queen of our heart and home.
Asking no bounty, favour or fee,
They come in their love to die for thee.

QUEBEC, *March 1, 1900.*

A VOICE FROM CANADA

TO AN ENGLISH PRO-BOER

HUSH, babbling Pharisee,
Scribe, hypocrite, do we
 Love, any more
 Than you do, war ?

Think you that darkling skies
And helpless orphans' cries
 Do never keep
 Our hearts from sleep ?

Have not our blinding tears,
In these late anxious years,
 Been wrung by pain
 For loved ones slain ?

Think you those hearts are steel
Who, for the common weal,
 Thus lay down all
 At duty's call ?

You talk, but do not share
The heavy load we bear
 Of sundered ties
 And sacrifice.

That far-off, lonely grave,
Where sleep the sons we gave,
Looms in our sight
By day and night.

We do not know what more
The future has in store,
What bitterer tears
May come with years,

But with set teeth we stand
To guard our Empire land,
To dare and spend
Unto the end.

So, critic, since for you
Our sons are fighting too,
Your railing cease
And give us—PEACE.

QUEBEC, 1901.

INSCRIPTION ON SOLDIERS' MONUMENT,
QUEBEC

Not by the power of Commerce, Art, or Pen,
Shall our great Empire stand ; nor has it stood :
But by the noble deeds of noble men,
Heroic lives, and Heroes' outpoured blood.

REQUIESCAT

GENERAL GORDON

O thou twice hero—hero in thy life
And in thy death—we have no power to crown
Thy nobleness ; we weep thine arm in strife ;
We weep, but glory in thy life laid down.

There comes no voice from Egypt, none did stand
Beside thee fall'n ; as who the winepress trod,
Thou wert alone ; thy face is hid in sand,
And thy last moments in the ear of God.

Dying as thou didst, no stone can guard thy name,
No storied marble mark thy dust beneath.
What need ? The whole world knows thee, speaks
thy fame,
And all the world hath shuddered at thy death.

Hath shuddered ; yet the stroke that laid thee low
Shall wring men's hearts with envy, and new eyes,
Age after age, shall kindle in the glow
Of thy great life and life's self-sacrifice.

We cannot dream the days of glory passed,
That England bears no heroes in her age ;
Strong honour lives, and breathed in thee, the last
And greatest hero on her history's page.

Saint ! hero ! through the clouds of doubt that loom
O'er darkling skies, thy life hath power to bless ;
We thank thee thou hast shown us in the gloom
Once more Christ's power and childlike manliness.

1885.

WILLIAM M'KINLEY

A TRIBUTE OF KINDRED

BROTHER of kings and king of brother men,
Hero and martyr, lo ! thou dost not sleep.
Thy dauntless soul, beyond our mortal ken,
Pursues life's journey through the eternal deep.

Elsewhere, not here, lives on the lofty aim,
The iron purpose of a steadfast life,
The strong, brave heart that forged a deathless name,
The tender love of duty, land and wife.

O mighty Sister in our royal line,
America ! guard well his sacred dust.
Thy grief is ours, e'en as our blood is thine—
We twain who hold the great world's peace in trust.

September 14, 1901.

THE EXCEEDING BITTER CRY

JANUARY 1897

FROM the lands burnt dead with sunshine, where our fathers fought and bled,
And have reaped a golden harvest, comes a cry to us for bread ;
For the millions, famine-stricken, starve and sicken in despair,
And the glazing eyes of famine see the vultures in the air.

Shall we shut up human pity ? Shall they cry to us in vain ?

Shall we sate ourselves with plenty, while they perish in their pain ?

Can we kneel and say 'Our Father,'—can our spirits hope for rest,

While the babe lies dead from starving on its starving mother's breast ?

They are black,—but they are brothers, and they suffer pain as we,

And the four great winds of heaven bring the death-cries o'er the sea ;

They are black,—but they are brothers, and the flag of England stands

Where the dead forms, drawn together, dry and whiten on the sands.

Lion-blooded sons of England, breathing glory as
your breath,
Up and gird you now, my brothers, for a giant strife
with death ;
By the flag we guard unsullied, by the God that reigns
above,
Rise and bind our mighty empire with the bands of
human love.

WAHONOMIN

THE INDIANS' JUBILEE HYMN TO THE QUEEN

GREAT mother ! from the depths of forest wilds,
From mountain pass and burning sunset plain,
We, thine unlettered children of the woods,
Upraise to thee the everlasting hymn
Of nature, language of the skies and seas,
Voice of the birds and sighings of the pine
In wintry wastes. We know none other tongue,
Nor the smooth speech that, like the shining leaves,
Hides the rough stems beneath. We bring our song,
Wood-fragrant, rough, yet autumn-streaked with love,
And lay it as a tribute at thy feet.
But should it vex thee thus to hear us sing,
Sad in the universal joy that crowns
This year of years, and shouldst thou deem our voice
But death-cry of the ages that are past,
Bear with us—say, ‘ My children of the woods,
In language learnt from bird and wood and stream,
From changing moons and stars and misty lakes,
Pour forth their love, and lay it at my feet ;
The voice is wild and strange, untuned to ear
Of majesty, ill-timed to fevered pulse
Of this young age, and meteor-souls that flash
New paths upon night’s dome ; yet will I hear
This singing of my children ere they die.’

Great mother ! thou art wise, they say, and good,
And reignest like the moon in autumn skies,

The world about thy feet. We have not seen
Thy face, nor the wild seas of life that surge
Around thy throne ; but we have stood by falls,
Deep-shadowed in the silence of the woods,
And heard the water-thunders, and have said,
' Thus is the voice of men about our Queen.
What is the red man but the forest stream,
The cry of screech-owl in the desert wilds ?
This flood that overflows the hills and plains
Is not for us. Back, Westward, Northward, ay,
Up to eternal winter 'neath the stars,
Our path must be in silence, till the snows
And sun and wind have bleached our children's
bones.
The red must go ; the axe and plough and plane
Are not for him. We perish with the pine,
We vanish in the silence of the woods ;
Our footsteps, like the war-trail in the snow,
Grow fainter while the new spring buds with life.'

Great mother ! the white faces came with words
Of love and hope, and pointed to the skies,
And in the sunrise splendour set the throne
Of the Great Spirit, and upon the cross
Showed us His Son, and asked a throne for Him.
Their speech was music ; but in camp at night
We brooded o'er the matter round the fire,
The shadowy pines about us, and the stars,
Set in the silent heavens, looking down.
We brooded o'er the matter days and years,
For thus each thought and thus each spake in words :
' We children of the woods have lived and died
In these our forests, since the first moon tipped
Their thousand lakes and rivers with her beams,
Pale silver in the fading sky of even.

Our fathers' faces kindled in the glow
Of setting suns ; they read the starlit sky ;
They heard the Spirit's breathing on the storm,
And on the quaking earth they felt His tread ;
But never yet the story of His Son
Was wafted to them from the sighing woods,
Or bird or stream. Our fathers' God is ours ;
And as for these new words, we watch and wait.'

Great mother ! we have waited days and years,
Through spring and summer—summer, autumn, spring ;
Brooding in silence, for anon we dreamed
A bird's voice in our hearts half sung, ' 'Tis true.'
We listened and we watched the pale-face come,
When, lo ! new gods came with them—gods of iron
And fire, that shook the forests as they rushed,
Filling with thunder and loud screeching, plains,
Mountains, and woods, and dimming with their
breath

The shining skies. These new gods, who were they,
That came devouring all, and blackening earth
And sky with smoke and thunder ? We knew not,
But fled in terror further from the face
Of these white children and their gods of iron ;
We heard no more their story of the Son,
And words of love. Their own lives were not love,
But war concealed and fire beneath the ash.
Thus ever now the burden of our speech—
We perish with the pine tree and the bird,
We vanish in the silence of the woods,
The white man's hunting-ground, it is not ours ;
We care not for his gods of iron and fire ;
Our home is in the trackless wilds, the depths
Of mountain solitudes, by starlit lakes,
By noise of waters in the unchanging woods.

Great mother ! we have wondered that thy sons,
Thy pale sons, should have left thy side and come
To these wild plains, and sought the haunts of bears
And red men. Why their battle with the woods ?
Whither they go upon their gods of iron,
Out of the golden sunrise to the mists
Of purple evening in the setting west ?
Their lives have scarce as many moons as ours,
Nor happier are. We know not what they seek ;
For death's cold finger chills their fevered life,
As in the wilds he stills the meanest worm,
And death flies with them over all their paths,
And waits them in the heart of wildest waste ;
They cannot break his power. Forgive these thoughts
If, as they rise like mists, they dim the gold
That zones thy brow. They came to us at night,
As we have sat in council round the fire ;
They seemed the echo of the sighing pines
Far in our soul. One evening rose a chief,
White-headed, bowed with years, one hand on
staff,
One on death's arm, preparing for the way.
' My sons,' he said, ' these people are not wise.
We bide our time, and they will pass away ;
Then shall the red man come like bird in spring,
And build the broken camp, and hunt and fish
In his old woods. These people pass away ;
For I have thought through many nights and days,
And wondered what they seek ; and now I know,
And knowing, say these people are not wise.
They found these plains beneath the burning west,
And westward, ever westward, still they press,
Seeking the shining meadows of the land
Where the sun sleeps, and, folded 'neath his wings,
The happy spirits breathe eternal day.

But I have lived through five score changing years,
And I have talked with wintry-headed chiefs,
And I have heard that kingdom is not reached
Through woods and plains, but by the bridge of death.
This people is not wise : we bide our time.'

Great mother ! they have told us that the snows
Of fifty winters sleep about thy throne,
And buds of spring now blossom with sweet breath
Beneath thy tread. They tell us of the sea,
And other lands, where other children dwell ;
Of mighty cities and the gleam of gold,
Of empires wider than the shining plains
Viewed from giant hill, that lift thy throne above
The clouded mountain-tops. They tell us, too,
Of wonders in the home of man ; of gods
Of iron and fire made servants, and of fire
Snatched from the clouds to flash man's swiftest
thought ;
But these are not for us. The forest flower
Droops in the haunts of man ; it needs the sky,
And smokeless air, and glances of the sun
Through rustling leaves. We perish with the woods ;
The plains are all before thee. Send thy sons
To plant and build, and drive their flashing gods,
Startling the forests, till, like ocean's bounds,
Thine empire rolls in splendour from wide east
To widest west, broad fields of gold for thee
And thy white children ; but our spirits wait
Amid the silent ages, and we pass
To where our fathers dwell, by silent streams,
And hunt in trackless wilds through cloudless days.
The wheels of thy great empire, as it moves
From east to west, from south to icy north,
Crush us to earth. We perish with the woods.

Great mother, if the changing moons have brought
Thee nearer to the darksome bridge that spans
The gulf between this and the eternal day,
If thy path and thy children's be the same,
And thy feet follow where thy fathers went,
Perchance thy soul upon earth's utmost verge,
The eternal sky about thee, and the deeps
Unfathomable beyond—perchance thy soul,
Grown weary with the fever of thy life,
May yearn for song of bird, and sighing pine,
And silent meditation of the woods ;
Perchance, when, looking back from infinite skies
To restless man, thy soul, too, echoes, ‘ Why ? ’
‘ Where ? ’ and ‘ Whither ? ’ and thy heart may love
This death-song of thy children, ere they pass
With bird and forest to the silent land.
Perchance the white face told us what was true,
And love and hope wait by the throne of God.
The ruffled lake gives out but broken gleams
Of the clear stars above ; so, restless life
May be the troubled reflex of the skies.
The world rolls onward, ever on and on,
Through clouded vast and moans of dying years,
Into the depths of sunset ; but the light
Blinds our dim eyes, we cannot see the goal.
The spirit of the world is not for us ;
We perish with the pine tree and the bird ;
We bow our heads in silence. We must die.

RELIGIOUS AND DEVOTIONAL VERSES

THE SOUL'S QUEST

PART I

IN the land that is neither night nor day,
Where the mists sleep over the forests grey,
A sad, sad spirit wandered away.

The woods are still—no brooks, no wind,
No fair green meadows can she find ;
But a low red light in the sky behind.

Far over the plain, to the spirit's sight,
The city's towers are black as night,
Against the edge of the low red light.

This side the city in darkness lies,
But westward, at the glowing skies,
It glares with a thousand fiery eyes.

The road is long, the hedgerows bare,
There 's the chill of death in the silent air,
And a glimmer of darkness everywhere.

' O sad, sad spirit, what thy quest,
With those flowing locks and that shadowy
vest ? '

The spirit answers, ' I seek for rest.'

' Where seekest rest, when the air is cold
On the long, dim road, and the clock hath tolled
The muffled hours from the belfry old ?

' Where seekest rest through the twilight grey
Of the mists that sleep on the woods alway ? '
' I seek to-morrow or yesterday ! '

Her face is pale, her feet are bare,
Her sad dark eyes, wide open, stare
At the glimmering darkness everywhere.

To those cheeks no rose hath summer brought,
But on their pallor time hath wrought
The troubled lines of an after-thought.

Her arms are crossed upon her breast,
Her round limbs shape the shadowy vest,
And thus, all silent, seeks she rest.

Her tread is light on the cold, hard road ;
For the tread may be light, yet heavy the load
Of grief at the heart and thoughts that goad.

She plucks a leaf from the roadway side,
And under its shade two violets hide—
Her hand is cold as of one that hath died.

She twines the violets in her hair ;
They have no scent—she does not care,
For the glimmer of darkness is everywhere.

And on through the dim of the twilight grey,
While the pale sky gloweth far away,
She seeks to-morrow or yesterday.

PART II

‘ O Abbess, Abbess, the air is chill !
I heard the chaunting over the hill,
Like an angel’s voice when the soul is still.

‘ O Abbess, open wide thy gate !
Out on the cold, dim road I wait,
A spirit lone and desolate.

‘ Take thou these hands and these weary feet,
Cold as a corpse in its winding-sheet,
For the song of the nuns was so strange and
sweet.

‘ Here with the sisters let me dwell,
Under these walls, in the loneliest cell,
Waiting the sound of the matin bell.

‘ Cut off these locks of flowing hair,
Cover with weeds this bosom bare,
For the glimmer of darkness is everywhere.

‘ Ask not my name, nor whence my way,
For the mist sleeps over the wood alway,
And I seek to-morrow or yesterday.’

She ’s passed within the chapel door ;
The nuns are kneeling on the floor,
But a low wind moaneth evermore.

High in the roof the echoes ring,
As sweeter and sweeter the sisters sing,
For they know that God is listening.

'*Ave Maria*, hear our cry,
As the shadows roll across the sky,
For those that live and those that die !

'*Ave Maria*, Virgin blest,
Help the sin-stained and distrest,
Give the weary-hearted rest !

'*Ave Maria*, who didst bear
Jesus in this world of care,
Grant us all thy bliss to share !'

From arch to arch the echoes ring,
Sweeter and sweeter the sisters sing,
For they know that God is listening.

Out of the north the oceans roll,
Washing the lands from pole to pole :
No rest—no rest for the old world's soul.

The after-glow of suns that set
O'er fields with morning dew once wet,
Where all life's flowering roadways met,

Long shadows of our joys has sent,
Sloping adown the way we went
Towards darkness where our feet are bent.

Is it the moan of the evening wind ?
Or the voice of the ocean in the mind,
While the pale red light looms up behind ?

Is it moan of wind, or convent bell,
Or cry of the ocean ? I cannot tell ;
But a voice in her heart has locked the spell.

She does not hear the organ's swell ;
In vain she strives her beads to tell,
For a voice in her heart has locked the spell.

She broods among the tangled fears,
The undergrowth of perished years,
That darken round the lake of tears.

Silent and dank, they fringe the brim
Of waters motionless and dim,
Unmoved by wings of Seraphim.

No lights on the altar the spirit sees,
The cloistered aisles are but leafless trees,
And the music, the sigh of the evening breeze.

No matin or vesper bell for her ;
The leafless branches never stir
In the pale, pale light of the days that were.

No matin or vesper hymn or prayer
Can shut those eyes' wide-open stare
At the glimmering darkness everywhere.

The sweetest singing dies away ;
No note of birds for those who stray
In the land that is neither night nor day.

PART III

In the shadowy light of the silent land,
With the tall gaunt hedges on either hand,
On the long, dim road doth the spirit stand.

Under the hedges the air is chill,
And the mists sleep over the forest still,
And are folded like wings on the sides of the hill.

Her arms are crossed upon her breast,
Her round limbs shape the shadowy vest,
Her feet are worn with seeking rest.

To her cheeks no rose hath summer brought,
While on their pallor time hath wrought
The troubled lines of an after-thought.

But sweet is the gaze of those sad dark eyes,
And sweet their look of mute surprise,
As something in the road she spies.

Spurned under foot, o'ergrown with moss,
Counted of foolish men but loss,
On the cold, hard road lies Jesus' cross.

In the dim twilight as she stood,
She saw the marks of Jesus' Blood,
Then stooped and kissed the Holy Rood.

There are sounds of joy from the years gone by,
There's a pale red light in the forward sky,
And a star looks down through the mist on high.

Hush ! for the light falls clear from that star,
Hush ! for the day-dawn kindles afar,
Hush ! for the gate of the sky is ajar.

What is the voice of the boundless sea
As it clasps the lands in an ecstasy ?
Not the voice of the dead, but of what shall be—

Of what shall be when the world shall cease,
And oceans die in the reign of peace,
When God grants pardon and release.

O sweetest taste of Jesus' Blood !
Joy bursts upon her like a flood ;
The spirit kisseth Holy Rood.

A low wind moaneth evermore,
The nuns still kneel upon the floor,
But Jesus trod this way before.

She lifts the sacred emblem up :
This was His drink, His bitter cup ;
And all His loved with Him must sup.

Beneath its arms she bows her head,
Those arms so rudely fashionéd,
Which Jesus made His dying bed.

She bends beneath the cross's weight,
But now no longer desolate,
She stands before the convent gate.

Sweeter and sweeter the sisters sing,
From arch and roof the echoes ring,
While God above is listening.

' *Ave Maria*, Virgin blest,
Help the sin-stained and distrest,
Grant the weary-hearted rest ! '

The altar-lights are shining fair,
And Jesus' cross is standing there ;
The darkness brightens everywhere.

In silent bliss the spirit kneels,
For mortal utterance half conceals
The deepest joy the bosom feels.

She bears her burden day by day ;
It wakens her at morning grey,
And calms her at eve's setting ray.

She bears it through the length of years ;
The rough wood drives away her fears,
The blood-stains check all earthly tears.

Through daily round of deed and psalm,
She moves in silent strength and calm,
The cross her solace and her balm.

She bears it round from door to door,
And lonely hearts that ached before,
Find joy and peace for evermore.

So in the present, people say,
Of holy deed and prayer alway,
She finds to-morrow and yesterday.

COGGESHALL, ESSEX,
November 12, 1886.

CALVARY

O SORROWFUL heart of humanity, foiled in thy fight
for dominion,
Bowed with the burden of emptiness, blackened
with passion and woe ;
Here is a faith that will bear thee on waft of omni-
potent pinion,
Up to the heaven of victory, there to be known and
to know.

Here is the vision of Calvary, crowned with the world's
revelation,
Throned in the grandeur of gloom and the thunders
that quicken the dead ;
A meteor of hope in the darkness shines forth like a
new constellation,
Dividing the night of our sorrow, revealing a path
as we tread.

Now are the portals of death by the feet of the Con-
queror entered ;
Flames of the sun in his setting roll over the city of
doom,
And robe in imperial purple the Body triumphantly
centred,
Naked and white between thieves and 'mid ghosts
that have crept from the tomb.

O Soul, that art lost in immensity, craving for light
and despairing,
Here is the hand of the Crucified, pulses of love in
its veins,
Human as ours in its touch, with the sinews of Deity
bearing
The zones of the pendulous planets, the weight of
the winds and the rains.

Here in the Heart of the Crucified, find thee a refuge
and hiding,
Love at the core of the universe, guidance and
peace in the night ;
Centuries pass like a flood, but the Rock of our Strength
is abiding,
Grounded in depths of eternity, girt with a mantle
of light.

Lo, as we wonder and worship, the night of the
doubts that conceal Him,
Rolls from the face of the dawn till His rays through
the cloud-fissures slope ;
Vapours that hid are condensed to the dews of His
grace that reveal Him,
And shine with His light on the hills as we mount
in the splendour of hope.

AT LAUDS

'TIS sweet to wake before the dawn,
When all the cocks are crowing,
And from my window on the lawn,
To watch the veil of night withdrawn,
And feel the fresh wind blowing.

The murmur of the falls I hear,
Its night-long vigil keeping ;
And softly now, as if in fear
To rouse their neighbours slumbering near,
The trees wake from their sleeping.

Dear Lord, such wondrous thoughts of Thee
My raptured soul are filling,
That, like a bird upon the tree,
With sweet yet wordless minstrelsy
My inmost heart is thrilling.

THE EVERLASTING FATHER

THOU whose face is as the lightning and whose chariot
as the sun,
Unto whom a thousand ages in their passing are as one,
All our worlds and mighty systems are but tiny grains
of sand,
Held above the gulfs of chaos in the hollow of Thy hand.

Yea, we see Thy power about us, and we feel its
volumes roll
Through the torrent of our passions and the stillness
of the soul,
Where its visions light the darkness till the dawn that
is to be,
Like the long auroral splendours on a silent polar sea.

Then uplift us, great Creator, to communion with Thy
will,
Crush our puny heart-rebellions, make our baser
cravings still.
Thou whose fingers through the ages wrought with
fire the soul of man,
Blend it more and more for ever with the purpose of
Thy plan.

Speak, O Lord, in voice of thunder, show Thy foot-
steps on the deep,
Pour Thy sunshine from the heavens on the blinded
eyes that weep,
Till the harmonies of nature and exalted human love
Make the universe a mirror of the glorious God above.

HYMN

‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.’—REV. iii. 20.

I HEARD a voice at midnight, and it cried,
 ‘O weary heart, O soul for which I died,
 Why wilt thou spurn My wounded hands and side ?

‘Is there a heart more tender, more divine,
 Than that sad heart which gave itself for thine ?
 Could there be love more warm, more full than Mine ?

‘What other touch can still thy trembling breath ?
 What other hand can hold thee after death ?
 What bread so sweet to him that hungereth ?

‘Warm is thy chamber, soft and warm thy bed ;
 Bleak, howling winds are round the path I tread ;—
 The Son of man can nowhere lay His head.

‘Wilt thou not open to Me ? To and fro
 I wander, weary, through the driving snow ;
 But colder still that thou wouldest spurn Me so.

‘I have a crown more bright than all that be,
 I have a kingdom wider than the sea ;
 But both have I abandoned, seeking thee.

‘Poor weary heart, so worn and sad within !
 Oh, open to thy Friend, thy Stay from sin,
 That I, with all My love, may enter in.’

I heard a voice at midnight, and I cried,
 ‘O Lord, I need Thy wounded hands and side—
 I need Thy love,—Lord, enter and abide.’

OUR DUTY

THE great world's heart is aching, aching fiercely in the night,

And God alone can heal it, and God alone give light ;
And the men to bear that message, and to speak the living word,

Are you and I, my brothers, and the millions that have heard.

Can we close our eyes to duty ? Can we fold out hands at ease,

While the gates of night stand open to the pathways of the seas ?

Can we shut up our compassions ? Can we leave one prayer unsaid,

Till the lands which Hell has blasted have been quickened from the dead ?

We grovel among trifles and our spirits fret and toss,
While above us burns the vision of the Christ upon the Cross ;

And the blood of God is streaming from His broken hands and side,

And the lips of God are saying, ‘ Tell my brothers I have died.’

O Voice of God, we hear Thee above the shocks of time,
Thine echoes roll around us, and the message is sublime ;
No power of man shall thwart us, no stronghold shall dismay,

When God commands obedience and love has led the way.

May 1909.

CRUCIFIXION

‘Lord, must I bear the whole of it, or none ?’
‘Even as I was crucified, My son.’

‘Will it suffice if I the thorn-crown wear ?’
‘To take the scourge My shoulders were made bare.’

‘My hands, O Lord, must I be pierced in both ?’
‘Twain gave I to the hammer, nothing loth.’

‘But sure, O Lord, my feet need not be nailed ?’
‘Had Mine not been, then love had not prevailed.’

‘What need I more, O Lord, to fill my part ?’
‘Only the spear-point in thy broken heart.’

May 8, 1909.

EVOLUTION

THOU stand'st complete in every part,
An individual of thy kind ;
But whence thou camest, what thou art,
Didst ever ask thee of thy mind ?

Thou claim'st a portion of God's earth ;
Thou say'st to all men, ' This is I ' ;
Thou hast a date to mark thy birth,
And other date when thou shalt die.

Thy years are in the planets' years ;
A space in all that mighty span,
A little space of smiles and tears,
Is writ in shining letters—' Man.'

Thou hear'st the mighty ocean roll,
Thou seest death on every hand ;
There loom strange phantoms in thy soul,
And boundless heavens arch the land.

Thy feet are on the sand and clay,
Which once had other growths than these,
And in the great world's yesterday,
Heard murmurs of the tropic seas.

Life out of death, death out of life,
In endless cycles rolling on,
And fire-gleams flashing from the strife
Of what will come and what has gone.

A perfect whole, a perfect plan,
 Ay, doubtless, in the perfect mind,
 An onward march since time began,
 With yet no laggard left behind.

All blended in a wondrous chain,
 Each link the fittest for its place ;
 The stronger made to bear the strain,
 The weaker formed to give it grace.

But what art thou and what am I ?
 What place is ours in all this scheme ?
 What is it to be born and die ?
 Are we but phases in a dream,

That earth or some prime mother dreams,
 Folded away in crimson skies ?
 Or are we dazzled with the beams
 Of light too strong for new-born eyes ?

Certes, we are not very much ;
 We cannot cause ourselves to be ;
 Not even the limbs by which we touch
 Are really owned by thee and me.

But they were fashioned years ago,
 Ay, centuries ; since earth's natal morn,
 The wondering ages saw them grow,
 Till our time came and we were born.

And we are present, future, past—
 Shall live again, have lived before,
 Like billows on the beaches cast
 Of tides that flow for evermore.

EVOLUTION

And yet thou sayest, ‘ This is I ;
 I am marked off from all my kind ;
 I look not to the by-and-by ;
 I care not for what lies behind.’

That may be so ; but to mine eyes
 A being of wondrous make thou art—
 The point at which infinities
 Converge, touch, and for ever part.

Thou canst not unmake what has been,
 Nor hold back that which is to come ;
 We dwell upon the waste between,
 In the small ‘ now ’ which is our home.

‘ Though this be so,’ thou answerest, ‘ still
 I feel and know myself to be ;
 Thy creed would make the perfect will
 In God’s sight like a stone or tree.’

Ah no ! for stone and tree are one,
 And perfect will bears different fruit ;
 The will is grander than the sun,
 The body brother to the brute.

But in the ages thou shalt be
 A link from unknown to unknown,
 A bridge across a darkling sea,
 A light on the world’s pathway thrown.

Ay, such is man—a moan in sleep ;
 A passing dream ; he thinks and is,
 And then falls back into the deep
 Where other deeps call unto this.

But in that thinking, in that pause,
That dream which did so little yield,
There met a universe of laws,
And branched out into wider field.

We live not for ourselves—ah no !
We do not live ; man lives in us.
The race dwells in us ; even so
The race will live, though we pass thus.

The forces that have fashioned thee
Have rolled through space since time began—
Have ranged the heavens, the earth, the sea,
And in God's time have made thee man.

And so to further goal they move,
When thou hast passed from mortal sight ;
To fashion beings that will prove
More wondrous still, more full of light.

We are the foam-crest on the wave,
Lit for a moment by the sun ;
A moment thus we toss and rave,
Then fall back when our day is done.

Thou then art twain—the force that builds
The broad foundations of the race,
And separate light from God that gilds
The soul with individual grace.

God looks at both : the one displays
The laws that work His purpose still ;
The other thine own spirit sways,
And here God asks the perfect will.

I would not have thee think the less
 Of this small part which is man's soul,
Nor miss the exceeding blessedness
 Of knowing thyself a separate whole.

' What proof,' thou sayest, ' if this be true,
 That thou and I survive the shock
Which summons all we are and do
 To credit of the primal stock ?

' If I and thou a moment are
 Conscious of self, of touch, of sight,
Then vanish like a falling star,
 And sink in everlasting night,

' What proof that in the overthrow
 The thing that says, knows, " This is I,"
Will not pass with the rest, and go
 Dissolved into the vast supply ? '

Though formed of elemental dust,
 And moulded through such countless years,
We perish not with these, but must
 Survive the rolling of the spheres.

We must, I say ; for what most high
 In man ? Is 't not the subtle part,
The power which tells me, ' This is I ;
 I am not everything thou art ' ?

Would God have laboured then and wrought
 With fire and water, life and death,
And through the weary cycles brought
 A creature with the vital breath,

And breathed such power within his soul,
And crowned him with such wondrous grace,
And said, ' Go forth from pole to pole,
And meet thy brother face to face,'

If this strange power were meant to sink
Back into chaos or be lost,
Or cast off as a broken link,
Or die like wave along the coast ?

Not that God's way. On—ever on,
To nobler, purer, higher things ;
From out the ages that are gone
Each newer, grander era springs.

So nought is lost, but all must pass,
And life through varied stages move,
From the pale fungus in the grass,
To deepest depths of light and love.

And we must pass—we shall not die,
Changed and transformed, but still the same,
To grander heights of mystery,
To fairer realms than whence we came.

God will not let His work be lost ;
Too wondrous is the mind of man,
Too many ages it has cost
The huge fulfilment of His plan.

But on we pass, for ever on,
Through death to other deaths and life,
To brighter lights when these are gone,
To broader thought, more glorious strife,

EVOLUTION

To vistas opening out of these ;
 To wonders shining from afar,
 Above the surging of the seas,
 Above the course of moon and star ;

To higher powers of will and deed,
 All bounds, all limits left behind ;
 To truths undreamt in any creed ;
 To deeper love, more God-like mind.

For this, the sky and sea and earth
 God moulded with His ice and fire ;
 For this the ages gave us birth,
 And filled our hearts with mad desire.

Great God ! we move into the vast ;
 All questions vain—the shadows come ;
 We hear no answer from the past ;
 The years before us all are dumb.

We trust Thy purpose and Thy will,
 We see afar the shining goal ;
 Forgive us if there linger still
 Some human fear within the soul !

Forgive us, if, when crumbles in
 The world that we have loved and known,
 With forms so fair to us, we sin
 By eyes averted from Thy throne !

Forgive us, if, with thoughts too wild,
 And eyes too dim to pierce the gloom,
 We shudder like a frightened child
 That enters at a darkened room !

Forgive us, if, when dies away
All human sound upon our ears,
We hear not, in the swift decay,
Thy loving voice to calm our fears !

But lo ! the dawn of fuller days ;
Horizon-glories fringe the sky !
Our feet would climb the shining ways
To meet man's widest destiny.

Come, then, all sorrow's recompense !
The kindling sky is flaked with gold ;
Above the shattered screen of sense,
A voice like thunder cries, ' Behold ! '

1887.

HYMN

AFTER THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

We hail Thee now, O Jesu,
Upon Thine Altar-throne,
Though sight and touch have failed us,
And faith perceives alone !
Thy love has veiled Thy Godhead,
And hid Thy power divine,
In mercy to our weakness,
Beneath an earthly sign.

We hail Thee now, O Jesu !
In silence hast Thou come ;
For all the hosts of heaven
With wonderment are dumb—
So great the condescension,
So marvellous the love,
Which for our sakes, O Saviour,
Have drawn Thee from above.

We hail Thee now, O Jesu !
For law and type have ceased,
And Thou in each Communion
Art Sacrifice and Priest ;
We make this great Memorial
In union, Lord, with Thee,
And plead Thy death and passion
To cleanse and set us free.

We hail Thee now, O Jesu !
For death is drawing near,
And in Thy presence only
Its terrors disappear.
Dwell with us, sweetest Saviour,
And guide us through the night,
Till shadows end in glory,
And faith be lost in sight.

Amen.

1886.

HYMN

AFTER RECEIVING THE HOLY COMMUNION

I HAVE Thee now, O Jesu,
Enshrined within my soul,
In all Thy love and fulness,
With power to make me whole.
Though cold and so unworthy,
Though weak and stained with sin,
I opened to Thee, Jesu,
And Thou hast entered in.

I have Thee now, O Jesu !
And oh, the thrill divine
To feel that Thou art in me,
To know that Thou art mine !
I have Thee, too, O Jesu,
As pledge of future bliss ;
But faith is lost in wonder
At rapture more than this.

I have Thee now, O Jesu !
Purge all my dross away,
Light up my inmost being
With Thy full flood of day ;
Do Thou, O Lord, shine through me
In all my words and ways,
Till others catch Thy glory,
And join in endless praise.

I have Thee now, O Jesu !
 Oh, never more depart !
Grant that no fresh offences
 Shall drive Thee from my heart ;
Till down the long, dark valley,
 The path which Thou hast trod,
There dawns in cloudless splendour
 The vision of my God.

Amen.

1886.

HYMN

CAST thy care on Jesus,
 Make Him now thy friend,
Tell Him all thy troubles,
 Trust Him to the end ;
He is Man and Brother,
 He is Lord and God,
And the way of sorrows
 Is the path He trod.

Cast thy care on Jesus,
 Nothing is too small
For His vast compassion,
 He can feel for all ;
In the gloom and darkness
 Clasp His living hand,
He will guide and cheer thee
 Through the desert land.

Cast thy care on Jesus,
 Tell Him all thy sin,
All thy fierce temptations
 And the wrong within ;
He Himself was tempted,
 And He pleads above
For the soul that asketh
 Pardon through His love.

Cast thy care on Jesus,
What is death to those
Who in deep submission
On His love repose ;
But a short step further,
Nearer to His side,
Where their eyes shall see Him
And be satisfied.

LINES

I SOMETIMES think that had I seen Thy face
In those old days when Thou wast with us here,
Clothed with our flesh, a man as we are men,
The very sight had filled my soul with grace ;
I should have clung to Thee, and not again
Moved from Thy side, no lurking doubt or fear
Could drive me from so sweet a hiding-place.

So think I sometimes, and would almost pray
That other age were chosen my faith to prove,
More near Thine own (if such a prayer might be),
Full of Thy memories. But no ; each day
Hath its own light, O Christ, and proofs of Thee ;
For there was one who saw Thy look of love,
Yet, having wealth, went sorrowful away.

HYMN

HAIL, sacred Feast, to weary mortals given,
Pledge of God's love ! O Christ, we here adore
Thee, the slain Lamb, and Thee, the Bread from
Heaven—
Our life and peace, our joy for evermore.

Feed us, dear Lord, Thine own great love supplying
Our lack of faith, our need of every grace ;
Dwell in us richly, till, on Thee relying,
We reach our home and see Thee face to face.

1884.

THE CROWN OF THORNS

WITH each new day, new cares will wait for thee,
Trials and heart-aches ; yet do thou not fear,
But take them lovingly, and, weaving them
Into a crown of thorns, wear and let be
For ever on thy head, a diadem,
More royal than gold, the dearest token here
Of that sad voice that whispers, ' Follow Me.'

1884.

‘ AD ECCLESIAM DEI ’

O CHURCH of God, our Mother,
Upon thy queenly head
There broods the living Spirit
Whom Christ Himself has shed ;
No more the dark dissensions,
The day of doubt is done,
When dangers gather round thee
Thy children stand as one.

O Church of God, our Mother,
Forgive the shameful past,
The worldly hearts that chilled thee,
The chains that bound thee fast ;
Behold, from the horizon
The clouds have rolled away,
And now with clearer vision
Men own thy gracious sway.

O Church of God, our Mother,
So bright thine annals shine,
The ages hold no triumphs
More wonderful than thine.
Thou didst in old times cradle
Our rude and warlike race,
Thy sons are kings of honour,
Thy daughters queens of grace.

O Church of God, our Mother,
The new dawn rises fair,
And broader paths of glory
Are opening everywhere ;
Beyond the ocean's thunders,
As in the olden days,
Thy creeds give faith her utterance,
Thy voice her prayer and praise.

O Church of God, our Mother,
God's wings are o'er thee spread,
And loyal sons are ready
For thee their blood to shed ;
No more the dark dissensions,
The day of doubt is done,
And round thee in the battle
Thy children stand as one.

IN MEMORIAM

A. H. MACKONOCHE

Two watchers sit beside the dead ;
From hour to hour no prayer is said,
For they are dumb and he is dead ;
And snows are curling round his head,
While God's white wings are overspread.

None heard the sad heart's stifled cry—
None, save the two dogs sitting by,
And Him that watcheth in the sky.
It passed, that agonising cry,
In gloom as deep as Calvary !

None saw the last look on that face
Where men once read such love and grace ;
No hand was nigh to smooth the trace
Of anguish on that pallid face.
The patient hero wins the race
Alone in God's great dwelling-place.

Earth folded him with gentle hands
In Nature's whitest swathing-bands ;
A snow-veil on his face and hands,
And silence on those northern lands.
Through cloud-rift in the west expands
A light from where God's temple stands.

The new-born soul in Paradise
Forgets the snow and wintry skies—
Forgets, in sunny Paradise,
The dying body's agonies.
Lord, keep him till that form shall rise
To meet Thee coming in the skies !

1888.

THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

CHRIST sat upon the mountain side,
 The blue sky overhead,
Beneath, in heaven's own colours dyed,
 The lake's still bosom spread.

Some sparrows fluttered through the sky,
 A breath the lilies stirred,
Far off a boat went drifting by
 With white wings like a bird.

But, heedless of the sea and shore,
 Christ turned aside to greet
The weary hearts who came to pour
 Their sorrows at His feet.

I ponder o'er the scene so fair
 Upon my bended knee,
Until I dream that I am there,
 And, lo, Christ looks at me.

THE EUCHARIST

My children, daily in your Church I stand,
And bring you priceless blessings in My hand,—

The Food and Drink which make the spirit live,
The pardon that none else hath power to give.

What holds you back ? Why do ye keep away ?
Do ye not need fresh grace from day to day ?

Your couch so soft, find ye it hard to rise ?
My couch was earth, My covering was the skies.

Perchance ye fear the dark and wintry street ;
I toiled for you with worn and bleeding feet.

Perchance ye think ye are not in My debt ;
What more could I have given you than ye get ?

Surely My bitter cross is in your view ;
That cross was borne, not for Myself, but you.

If sense of your unfitness holds you back,
Who but Myself can give you what ye lack ?

What if that day ye come not to My board,
Should bring the swift, sharp summons of your
Lord ?

My children, be not fearful, come to Me
Like Peter walking on the treacherous sea.

Children, I stand amongst you day by day ;
Oh, if ye love Me, do not keep away.

THE PRAYER BOOK

CHILD, if thou wilt, my wingéd words shall rise
And bear thy thoughts above the starlit skies ;
While through my leaves the clarion echoes roll
Of God's eternal message to the soul.

JUSTIN

‘Θεὸς ηὐ ὁ λόγος . . . καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο.’

Down by the sea, in infinite solitude
And wrapt in darkness, save when gleams of light
Broke from the moon aslant the hurrying clouds
That fled the wind, lay Justin, worn with grief,
And heart-sick with vain searching after God.
He heeded not the cold white foam that crept
In silence round his feet, nor the tall sedge
That sighed like lonely forest round his head ;
His heart was weary of this weight of being,
Weary of all the mystery of life,
Weary of all the littleness of men,
And the dark riddle that he could not solve—
Why men should be, why pain and sin and death,
And where were hid the lineaments of God.
No voice was near. Behind, a lofty cape,
Whose iron face was scarred by many a storm,
Loomed threatening in the dark, and cleft the main,
And laid its giant hand upon the deep.
One grizzled oak-tree crowned it, and the surf
Broke ever at its base, with ceaseless roar,
Powerless to mar its silent majesty.
Sweet was the loneliness to Justin, sweet
Perturbéd nature, as in harmony
With the dark thoughts that beat upon his soul.
Nor speechless long he lay. The tide of grief,
O'erflowing the narrow limits of the mind,

Broke from him, and in burning words he cried :
' O God, if God there be in this foul chase !
O Fate, if Fate it be that drives us thus !
O Chance, if it be Thou that mouldeth all !
Stern Power, whate'er Thy name, that sit'st sublime
Above creation, throned, creation's Lord,
With feet upon the spheres, whose flaming arms
Scatter new worlds from age to age, to roll
Through the dim cycles of all time, to bloom
Into warm life—what iron law impels,
Or wanton cruelty in the eternal deep
Of mind supreme, Thee to send sin and death
To prey thus on the creatures of Thine hands,
Until the white skulls crumble back to earth
From whence they sprung ? O Chance ! O Fate ! O
God !

My soul is broken with the clang of worlds ;
The universe is discord all to me.

I see dark planets roll o'er human graves,
I feel them quivering with the cries of souls ;
I know no more. O Power, whose face is veiled
From man in Thine own greatness,—Thou, whom I
Through weary years have sought, but sought in vain,
In every shadow upon every hill,
In the sweet features of a child, or on
The illimitable sea, in heat, in cold,
And in the rain that clothes the earth with buds,
And in the breath of things invisible,
Till, worn and helpless, now I long for death,—
Let me before I die hear some still voice
(If such indeed there be), some undertone
That, flowing from eternity through all
The jarring voices that now rend the soul,
Shall blend them into one long harmony :
So let me hearing die, and dying rest.'

He ceased, and, sweet as after day of storm
Flows the still sea at even—the winds and waves
Asleep in purple mists—a silence crept
Over the worlds and flooded Justin's soul ;
And in the silence Justin heard a voice
And the warm throbbing of a human heart.
And through the darkness moved the form of Christ,
White-robed, with crown of thorns and those sad eyes
That saw His Mother weep beside the cross.
Then from innumerable throats uprose
One glorious music, one great hymn of praise.
But that which ran through all, and linked them all
In one long harmony—that undertone
Which made them music—was the voice of Christ
And the soft beating of His human heart.
A calm light stole on Justin, and a peace,
Unknown before, unutterable, deep
Within the spirit's depths—a new-born sense,
As though his heart had eyes, and every eye
Saw God through all in His own loveliness.
The vision passed, and slowly Justin rose,
Unwilling quickly to disturb the peace
Which the strange dream had poured into his soul,
And the last accents of the voice that yet
Throbbed in his heart and kindled all his love.
There was a stillness and a hush o'er nature,
The sweet expectancy of early dawn
That waits its king. The wind had fall'n, the sea
And shore spoke but in whispers ; only birds
Felt not the universal awe, but from their nests,
Dew-sprinkled, woke with songs the sleeping woods,
Through which, a faded beauty, peered the moon.
Then, turning, Justin suddenly beheld
A man of years, with long dark robes and hair
Whiter than sea-foam in the moonlight seen,

Strewn on black rocks, who, when Justin rose,
Moved nearer to him, saying, ‘ O my son !
For son thou art in this new faith whereto
I call thee, seeing thou wilt be born again
By water and the washing of thy soul
From its vain creeds, me hath the Father sent
(In His great mercy loving thee and all)
To be a witness to thee of thy dream,
To solve the mysteries thou couldst not solve
By thine own searching, and to lead thee now
To that dear Voice thou heard’st, and lay thine head
Upon the Heart that filled thy soul with peace.’

So by the sea, among the frowning rocks,
They sat in converse, while the aged priest
Led Justin’s spirit onward through the gloom
Of vain philosophies, as one who guides
An alpine traveller up some dizzy height,
Where opening views expand at every step
Through lessening mist, till Justin gazed at last
Upon a manger rude, wherein there lay,
The form and features of the Infant God.
‘ My Father,’ then cried Justin, ‘ now my heart
Reads the bright message of my dream. I see
How vain and futile all philosophies,
Save this the last which burns into my soul
With fire of love so wondrous ; yet I see
How even they, with weak and tremulous hand,
Point toward the Christ and lead men up to Him.
I now descry His footsteps in dead years,
He guiding me unconscious, knowing Him not.
When first my limbs, full-grown in sinewy youth,
Felt the strong life within, my spirit glad
Moved like broad day enshrined in cloudless skies.
No care I knew, no sorrow grieved my heart,

But all was joy—a throbbing, flowing joy.
I wandered through the forests and the wilds,
On mountain height, above the birth of storms ;
I heard unmoved the thunder at my feet,
And tottering crags that filled abysmal depths
With shattered pinnacles, and voices dread
That made earth tremble to its central fire ;
I heard the lion's roar, but felt no fear :
The many-fingered forests clapped their hands,
They breathed my life, the lions were free as I,—
I felt all nature and myself were one ;
Birds, beasts, and insects, breathing flowers and trees,
And charméd life linked us in brotherhood.
I watched the rising sun from day to day
Surprise the world with glories ever new.
No clouds obscured ; the rosy hands of dawn
But lifted us to realms of joyousness
And deepening light. No thought of setting day
Saddened my heart, and in the silent eve
I saw the new sun, like a golden seed,
Hid in the crimson bosom of the old,
Full of fresh life and hope and songs of birds,
To wake the morn. The fish and I were friends ;
Their silvery shinings could no swifter pierce
The lucid depths and shallows than could I ;
They were my brothers, too, for they had life,
And life meant joy, and joy was brotherhood.
My comrades laughed, and called me “ ocean's king,”
“ Neptune, the ocean's king.” “ Not so,” said I ;
“ Call me not king, but rather friend of all ! ”
Thus passed the years, till one day in a wood,
As I lay dreaming by a moss-edged pool,
Whose twinkling eyes were laughing at the trees
That laughed in golden glories overhead,
While burnished beetles, green and amber-hued,

Skimmed o'er its waves, I heard a strange wild note,
Above the notes of birds, so beautiful,
It thrilled my soul, and made my pulses glow
With warmer life. The leaves were pushed aside,
And, stepping through the shadows, came a youth,
God-like in motion, tall and supple-limbed,
Drenched with the dappled sunlight, and begirt
With skin of leopard clasped about the waist
With silver. Pendant from his neck there hung
A shell, such as Apollo found at dawn,
Sea-voiced and singing to the plaintive wind,
Careless who heard. This, when he held and struck
With skilful hand, gave forth divinest sounds,
More soft than the low humming of the bees,
And sweeter than the trill of nightingale ;
Or, stern and powerful, as his mood would change,
Like the loud voice that fills the midnight trees
And runs before the chariot of the storm,
Startling all nature, crying, " Lo ! he comes,
The Storm-God comes ! " or, shrill as winter winds
That wail at evening round the woodman's hut,
When close-drawn lattice and the blazing hearth
And meal well-earned make glad the hearts within
Of children and of sire. " O youth ! " I cried,
Gaining my speech at last, " fain would I know
The art that can so charm the sense,—not birds
Nor aught on earth so beautiful. Would I
Could follow thee in all thy wanderings,
Could hear thee play and drink my spirit's fill
Of those wild melodies ! These strains have roused
Unutterable longings in my soul,
Dreams of the gods, and voices of dead years.
The liquid notes so thrilled me with their power
That, with expanding consciousness, I saw
The birth of empires, heard the rolling spheres,

The din of cities, cries of wasted hearts,
Marshalling of steeds, ravings of fevered men ;
And, over all, the moaning of the sea.
Since music hath such power to stir the soul,
Like thee, henceforth, I am her worshipper.”
Then, with a smile like sunlight on his face,
He sang this song in answer, carelessly—

“ O Soul, glad Soul, what wert thou without song ?
Morns without sunshine, wilds without a tree,
A waste of voiceless desert, wide and long,
Dark rivers dying in eternal sea,
O Soul, sad Soul, *that* wert thou without song.

“ O Soul, sad Soul, the rivers have to die,
Morns grow to eve, trees wither by the way,
Clouds hide the sun, and tears fall from the sky ;
But Music lives though earth should melt away.
O Soul, glad Soul, she will not let thee die.”

‘ He scarce had ceased when such a pain convulsed
His features as the agony that comes
At death, and with one ringing cry he shook
An adder from his foot, then wildly fled,
With face distorted, blanched with deadly fear,
Eyes glaring madly, through the tangled glade,
Like some chased stag that hears the hounds behind,
Nor recks what lies before. I followed fast,
But swift as wind he fled. A river deep
And rapid flowed hard by, whose rocky sides,
Upheaved by some convulsion, frowning stood
To guard its narrow channel. There a cliff
Stretched half across the stream, and at its foot
The hurrying waters curled in many a fold
Of creamy white. Him, on the rocks I found

There lying, prostrate, racked with anguish sore,
And cold with coming death ; his foaming lips
Were bloodless, and his limbs, all stained and torn,
Writhed helplessly. I brought green moss and placed
For pillow 'neath his head ; I laved his brow
And face and tangled hair ; but all in vain
I strove, for ever a wild look would come
In his dark eyes, a look of deadly fear.
Colder he grew, and silent, till at length
I thought him dead, and wondered, pitying him.
His beauteous form lay helpless on the sand,
Like some white statue fallen from its niche,
Broken irreparably. A sudden thought
Flashed on my mind. The shell—the shell was there,
Still round his neck. If I could wake some sounds
Of that new power that had so swayed my soul,
What might not chance ! For music should indeed,
If god of men, be master over death,
And light up fire within the icy breast.
I seized the shell and struck it : one low sound
Broke from it, dying mid the cliffs and roar
Of current, soft as a child's moan in dreams.
But, ere I touched again, with a wild laugh
That made the forests ring and scared the owls
From their day-sleep, and drove them hooting out
In blinding sunlight, suddenly he sprang,
Clutched with mad hands the shell, and, crushing it,
Flung the white fragments in the waves below.
He saw them sink, then crying, " It is vain !
The shadow comes upon me ! " he fell dead.
O death-cry in the roaring of the waves,
O death-cry in the stillness of the rocks,
O death-cry in the laughing of the trees !
The shadow passing by had fallen on me,
Never to rise. So thought I then. I broke

Into loud weeping that glad life should end,
In pain and bitterness the fairest hopes
Of nature dying unfruitful. Stygian night
And gloom infernal darkened all my soul.
Cries of the Furies and the torrent's roar
Rang in my ears, and voices out of hell
Re-echoed, " It is vain ; the shadow comes ! "
I hid the dead with moss, then turned and fled,
I cared not whither, so that I might fly
From the dark thoughts that drove me night and day,
And sights of death that haunted me. All changed
The glorious world ! and rapine, lust, and death
Glared in each face, and blasted all, save wilds
Where man was not. Then, Father, came the thought
That in that higher nature, which the strains
Of music roused, but could not satisfy,
The soul of man might win its longed-for peace.
So sought I wisdom and the secrets dread
Of life and death, nor knew I where to seek.
The burning fever of intense desire
For something behind all, through all, in all,
Drove me to fathom all philosophy.
Thus long time sought I God, unknowing, in fire,
In cold, in light, and, mole-like, closed my eyes,
And groped through nature, while the Truth I sought
Was at my door, His hand upon my latch,
And I too blind to see, for the dark shade
Of things material hung upon my sight.
O Father, I was fearful lest the truth
Should grind my soul to powder if I found.
For what was I but man ? and God, the God
Of this great universe, what should He care
For one lone heart among a myriad stars ?
If I should find—what should I find, indeed,
But some great power my senses could not grasp,

A part of some vast whole I could not see,
And I no more to Him than breathing clay ?
What link between the Maker and the made ?
For men can draw no nurture from the earth
Save through the living forms of beasts and plants,
Which link us with it. So methought, if God
Should be the God I deem Him, how can He,
The giant Force that moves the mighty world,
Soothe the fierce hunger in the soul of man
That craves for love ? What sympathy between
The finite and the infinite ? Life itself
Grew hard to breathe beneath eternal clouds ;
No sun, no goal, to cheer. But now I see
In this dear Christ the answer of my soul ;
The pledge of God's great love ; the link that binds
The Godhead and the manhood into one ;
The undertone that makes one harmony
Of our existence, giving life and peace
And love for men where once a fruitless search
Through the blind forces of the universe,
In weary years, shut out the light of day,
And dried the fount of love within the soul.'
He ceased, and answered lovingly the sage :
' Son, I perceive that now thy soul hath found
The peace it sought, and in the rifted Side
A hiding-place and shelter from the blast.
Now, I perceive the Spirit, as at first,
Moves on the troubled waters of thy mind,
And from dark chaos bringeth light and peace.
And now, in this still hour, when every day
On the dim altar lies the Son of God,
That offering of which the prophet spake,¹
And feeds His children with their daily bread,
Let us speak on of those high themes that lift

¹ Mal. i. 11.

The soul from out the trammels of this life
 Up to the throne of God ; and so, perchance,
 As on that country road at eventide,
 The risen One shall come with gentle voice
 And set our hearts on fire.'¹

Thus they conversed,
 Unconscious of aught else, in trance divine.
 And, as a mist rising from vale and hill
 Discloses fields, and, further off, the dawn
 On the broad sea, until there rolls unveiled
 The long full glory of the landscape, thus,
 As Justin sat, clearer his vision grew
 Of this new faith, until he saw the Christ
 Come towards him through the mist of dying creeds
 That once had shrouded Him. And thus they spake ;
 And Justin learned how suffering here and sin
 Resisted were but powers to try the soul,
 And forge it out more strong for this hard life,
 More bright for that hereafter, and that Christ,
 Informing all the soul with His great love,
 Can purge the thoughts and bend the stubborn will.
 For other creeds touch but the edge of being.
 The living Christ breathes life into our life ;
 Since He hath trod our path and conquered all,
 In the lone desert and upon the cross,
 With bleeding hands and feet.

Then, kneeling down
 On the cold shore, Justin, with lifted face
 Turned to the glimmering east, cried, 'God ! my God !
 Lord of innumerable worlds which move,
 Zone upon zone, through that thick night which hangs
 About Thy feet for ever—Thou, whose voice
 From the dead earth can frame the souls of men,
 The lips that murmur praises, and the eyes

¹ St. Luke xxiv. 13-31.

That kindle into love—O Thou, from whom
In the blind past flowed forth the light and power
That make creation circle round Thy throne
Through all the ages—Thou, to whom alone
Time's self is dead, and death is but new life
That flows unseen through this great universe,
Reframing all and springing in new forms
More worthy Thee—O Thou, in whom unite
The past, the present, and the future—Thou,
The centre of all time, the great I AM,
Heart of Eternity,—in Thee I find,
O God, my God, the resting-place I sought,
In Thee I find the answer of my quest,
In Thee the satisfaction of my soul.
I thank Thee Thou hast led me like a child
To these sweet streams for which my soul hath longed
Through the dim past. And now I see anew
How all creation, like some pyramid,
Built on a waste of ages as the sands
Of a great desert, doth on every side,
Step upon step, lead upward to Thy throne.
Inscrutable Thy ways, O God, and yet
Through the thick clouds that hide Thy face there
comes
A beam of light, the offspring of Thy love ;
For in my dreams I heard a human voice,
And the warm beating of a human heart
Throbbing through nature ; and I saw far off,
In the dim void, the suffering face of Christ.
O Christ in God ! O God in Christ ! O God !
Pledge of the Father's love, O Fount of light !
Thine was the voice that stilled my fearful heart,
Thine was the heart that filled my soul with peace.
O Christ, the centre of humanity !
O God, the heart of this great universe !

O Christ in God ! Thou linkest all to Thee
By Thy torn side and bleeding hands and feet.
How can we fear, though long and loud the storm,
If through the darkness comes a human voice ?
How can we tremble, when our head is laid
Upon that breast where beats a human heart ?
O Man in God, that bringest God to men !
O God in Man, that liftest man to God !
Effulgence of the essence which, divine,
Without Thee incommunicable were ;
Strong Light to light all mysteries, and Thou,
The perfect rest I sought through weary years
On trackless wastes ! Behold, in faith and love,
O God, my God, I come, I come to Thee.'
He ceased, and, slowly rising from his knees,
He saw the priest afar, with tearful eyes,
And arms outstretched in thankfulness, and said,
' I would be born again in this new faith,
My Father, by the washing of my soul
From its dark stains, for I am but a babe,
And would learn life anew.' So, silent, moved
They to the sea, absorbed in thoughts too deep
For earthly speech, and silence fell awhile
Upon the earth in reverence to its God,
And sky and ocean seemed to wait in awe.
There, by the long white ripples on the shore,
The priest stooped down in that still hour, and took
A handful from the waves, the eternal sea,
Which, like the love of God, flows over all,
Or height or depth, and levels all, and thus
Baptized he Justin in the Triune Name,
And on his forehead made the holy sign.
And, as the water fell on him, the sun
Rose in full glory, and the sky grew bright,
And angels sang far off, for day had dawned

Upon the ocean and in Justin's soul.
 Then spake the priest, ' My son, in this calm sea
 I read thy life, all stillness now and peace,
 In the sweet morning 'neath the new-born day.
 But see, the wind now breaks it into waves,
 Which, rising from their sleep, each tipped with light,
 Make that long golden pathway to the sun.
 So shall it be with thee. Thy soul now yearns
 To rest for ever at the feet of Christ ;
 But suffering, pain, and toil shall sweep across
 Its stillness, and the strife of noisy tongues,
 And persecution, cold, and nakedness
 Shall break its surface ; but each pain shall be
 Bright with the love of Christ, and all thy life
 Shall be a path to lead men up to Him.'

So the priest parted, blessing him, and Justin
 Rose from his knees and moved among all men,
 And reasoned with them of the love of God
 And his dear Christ, and led men up to Him
 From false philosophies, until at last
 His life set in the crimson of his blood,
 And rose in splendour near the throne of God.

1885.

'AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM'

THY glory alone, O God, be the end of all that I say ;
 Let it shine in every deed, let it kindle the prayers that
 I pray ;
 Let it burn in my innermost soul, till the shadow of
 self pass away,
 And the light of Thy glory, O God, be unveiled in the
 dawning of day.

1885.

SONNETS

INSCRIPTION WRITTEN IN A BOOK OF SONNETS

WHEN, in life's house, life's cares are vexing thee,
Look through these windows on Eternity.

THE KING'S BASTION

FIERCE on this bastion beats the noonday sun ;
The city sleeps beneath me, old and grey ;
On convent roofs the quivering sunbeams play,
And batteries guarded by dismantled gun.
No breeze comes from the Northern hills which run
 Circling the blue mist of the Summer's day ;
 No ripple stirs the great stream on its way
To those dim headlands where its rest is won.

Ah God, what thunders shook these crags of yore,
 What smoke of battle rolled about this place,
 What strife of worlds in pregnant agony :
Now all is hushed, yet here, in dreams, once more
 We catch the echoes, ringing back from space,
 Of God's strokes forging human history.

TO A GREEK STATUE

FOUND IN HERCULANEUM

WHAT eyes have worshipped thee, O passionless
Cold stone, thou darling beauty of dead men
And buried worlds ! What hearts in those days when
Beauty was god have longed for thy caress,
As, 'mid voluptuous feast and wild excess,
They saw the dawn-light of the Eastern skies
Crimson that brow and kindle in those eyes,
And felt their glutted passion's emptiness.
And still thou mockest us, O cruel stone,
And still thine eyes are gazing far away,
Drawing out man's love that loves thee all in vain.
Yea, to all time, thy beauteous white lips say,
'Love's deepest yearnings leave man most alone,
And in man's deepest pleasure there is pain.'

1907.

TIME

I SAW Time in his workshop carving faces ;
Scattered around his tools lay, blunting griefs,
Sharp cares that cut out deeply in reliefs
Of light and shade ; sorrows that smooth the traces
Of what were smiles. Nor yet without fresh graces
His handiwork, for oftentimes rough were ground
And polished, oft the pinched made smooth and round ;
The calm look, too, the impetuous fire replaces.

Long time I stood and watched ; with hideous grin,
He took each heedless face between his knees,
And graved and scarred and bleached with boiling
tears.

I wondering turned to go, when, lo ! my skin
Feels crumpled, and in glass my own face sees
Itself all changed, scarred, careworn, white with
years.

1886.

ACROSS THE SEA

THE confines of our being are not these
White limbs of sense. Our true selves broader are
And higher than the path of furthest star.
Beyond the reach of sense, each hears and sees
And feels. The root alone of giant trees
Touches the earth ; their branches pierce to heaven.
' To-day,' ' Here,' ' There,' are to the body given ;
Our spirits watch among the eternities.

Dearest, our beings can mingle, and our lips
Kiss off the dark world-sadness from the soul ;
Our hands can clasp, our eyes return love's gaze
Though waste lands moan between, where crimson dips
The westering sun, and though wide oceans roll,
Though being so far, we breathe in different days.

1886.

LOVE'S SHADOWS

THERE come dull days in love's clear atmosphere,
When clouds and doubt obscure the wide expanse.
The woods are still ; no songs of birds entrance ;
No sunlight falls, and desolate and drear,
As if harmonious with the lurking fear
Which sucks love's peace, the leaden waves that glance
From rock-bound coast the general gloom enhance ;
And spectral winds are wailing far and near.

When suddenly, and oft in darkest hour,
I hear some strain of music, or some voice,
Or some of thy dear writing chance I see,
And, lo ! the spell is broken, and the power
Of darkness, earth, and sea, and sky rejoice,
And all my being thrills with songs of thee.

1886.

ON BEING GIVEN A PIECE OF EDELWEISS
BEFORE VISITING SWITZERLAND

THINE everlasting mountains and their snows
And awful silence, floweret, know I not ;
I have not wandered to thy native spot
Among the crags, but oft as I repose,
Musing by winter fire at daylight's close,
In fancy have I viewed those depths of sky
And infinite clouded crags, while fronting high,
Peak upon peak, the eternal Alps uprose.

Mysterious power, God-planted in the soul,
That thus transcends all space and the confined
Limits of sense, Imagination, hail !
Pledge art thou of that life when death shall roll
Back our flesh prison-bars, and the freed mind
Shall grasp the giant truths behind the veil.

1886.

ROME

IMPERIAL city, slumb'ring on thy throne
Of vanished empire, once thy voice and hands
Rocked the wide world ; thy fingers wove the
lands
Into thy girdle ; who for crown alone
Didst wear the stars. Yet still in undertone
Man hears thy deathless utterance, though Time's
sands
Roll centuries ; thou clasp'st the earth with bands
Of speech, art, law, and subtle powers unknown.

Thou wast not meant to die ; thy mighty heart
Pulsed with the universe. Thy deeds of old
Flame like the sunset skies through clouds which
throng ;
They blazon on thy throne a name apart
In red of mighty victories, in gold
Of all things valorous and great and strong.

1888.

TO THE SEA

O STRANGE, sublime, illimitable Sea,
Majestic in thy sovran self-control,
And awful with the furious tides that roll
Round Earth's proud cliffs who bow their heads to
thee ;—
Thou art like God in thy vast liberty,
Thy throne is the wide world from pole to pole,
Thy thunders are Time's passing bell, and toll
The knell of all that has been, is, and is to be.

O mighty rock-bound Spirit, bright to-day,
To-morrow leaden 'neath the clouds of gloom,
Or mystic with the stars that overspan,—
Beneath thy billows, where the wild winds play,
There broods a darkness deeper than the tomb,
In caverns voiceless since the world began.

ISCARIOT

MEEK, passionless, precise, with pallid face,
Judas grew up, his mother's constant joy,
Who thanked Jehovah daily that her boy
Of boyhood's viciousness had not a trace.
Yet, in the heart of that which she thought grace
A devil lurked, more subtle to destroy
Than any other Satan doth employ
To wreak his vengeance on the human race.

In after years, the man's soul grew so dead,
That when he met Love's Self and held Love's
Hand,
Nay, kissed Love's Lips, he still could Love with-
stand.
Too late the thirst which drove him to his doom
Was quenched, when back the abhorrent daylight
fled
From that lone gibbet darkening in the gloom.

MANHOOD

WITH child-faith dead, and youth-dreams gone like
mist,
We stand, at noon, beneath the blazing sun
Upon life's dusty road, our course half done.
No more we stray through woods where birds hold
tryst,
Nor over mountains which the dawn hath kissed ;
In glare and heat the race must now be run
On this blank plain, while round us, one by one,
Our friends drop out and urge us to desist.

Then from the brazen sky rings out a voice,
' Faint not, strong souls, quit you like men, rejoice,
That now like men ye bear the stress and strain,
With eyes unbound seeing life's naked truth.
Gird up your loins, press on with might and main,
And taste a richer wine than that of youth.'

THE HEAVEN OF LOVE

I ROSE at midnight and beheld the sky,
Sown thick with stars, like grains of golden sand
Which God had scattered loosely from His hand
Upon the floorways of His house on high ;
And straight I pictured to my spirit's eye
The giant worlds, their course by wisdom planned,
The weary waste, the gulfs no sight hath spanned,
And endless time for ever passing by.

Then, filled with wonder and a secret dread,
I crept to where my child lay fast asleep,
With chubby arm beneath his golden head.
What cared I then for all the stars above ?
One little face shut out the boundless deep,
One little heart revealed the heaven of love.

LOVE'S ETERNITY

BETWEEN the stars, the light-waves on and on
Roll from the scenes of earth's past history
Unto the margins of eternity.
No day is lost of all that ever shone,
Each with its story into space hath gone
So that, to-night, some distant world may see,
Looking at earth, the Cross on Calvary,
Or the green plain and camps at Marathon.

Dear heart, whose life is woven into mine,
Who art the light and music of my days,
We move towards death, yet let us have no
fear ;
If nothing dies, not even light's faintest rays,
Sure that vast love which links my soul with thine
Marks for eternity our union here.

AT NIGHTFALL

O LITTLE hands, long vanished in the night—
Sweet fairy hands that were my treasure here—
My heart is full of music from some sphere,
Where ye make melody for God's delight.
Though autumn clouds obscure the starry height,
And winds are noisy and the land is drear,
In this blank room I feel my lost love near,
And hear you playing,—hands so small and white.

The shadowy organ sings its songs again,
The dead years turn to music at its voice,
And all the dreams come back my brain did
store.
Once more, dear hands, ye soothe me in my pain,
Once more your music makes my heart rejoice,—
God speed the day we clasp for evermore !

EASTER ISLAND

THERE lies a lone isle in the tropic seas,—
A mountain isle, with beaches shining white,
Where soft stars smile upon its sleep by night.
And every noonday fans it with a breeze.
Here on a cliff, carved upward from the knees,
Three uncouth statues of gigantic height,
Upon whose brows the circling sea-birds light,
Stare out to ocean over the tall trees.

For ever gaze they at the sea and sky,
For ever hear the thunder of the main,
For ever watch the ages die away ;
And ever round them rings the phantom cry
Of some lost race that died in human pain,
Looking towards heaven, yet seeing no more than
they.

THE MARTYR

THE dark square glimmers 'neath the morning skies,
And issuing slowly through the sombre gate
Come priest and monk, soldier and magistrate,
While, midst them, walks the prisoner, with his eyes
Bent on the ground, going to his sacrifice.
He limps, from tortures wrought by powerless hate,
He fronts wild wolves who for his life-blood wait,
Yet now he thrills with God's own harmonies.

Fearless, he stands above the great, hushed crowd :
 He hears the monks drone out his burial song,
 He feels the hot flames round the faggots
 creep ;
And, as the thick smoke wraps him in a cloud,
 Which rolls to Heaven, his voice rings clear and
 strong—
‘ Thy Kingdom come ’ : and so he falls asleep.

EVENSONG IN THE WOODS

HUSH, let us say, ‘ Our Father,’ in this wood,
 And through bare boughs look up into the
 sky,
 Where fleecy clouds on autumn winds go by.
Here, by this fallen trunk, which long since stood
 And praised the Lord and Giver of all good,
 We ’ll sing ‘ Magnificat.’ With curious eye,
 A squirrel watches from a branch on high,
As though he too would join us if he could.

Now in our ‘ Nunc Dimittis,’ soft and low,
 Strange woodland voices mingle, one by one ;
 Dead songs of vanished birds, the sad increase
Of crumpled leaves on paths where rough winds go,
 The deepening shades, the low October sun,—
 ‘ Lord, let thy servant now depart in peace.’

THE MILL-STREAM

CLEAR down the mountain, 'neath the arching green,
And o'er mossed boulders dappled by the sun,
With many a leap the laughing waters run.
They tumble fearless down each dark ravine,
And roam through caves where day has never been :
Until, at last, the open pool is won,
Where, by their prisoned strength, man's work is done
In that old mill which branching cedars screen.

Here, all day long, the massy logs, updrawn
Against the biting saw, are loud with shrieks.
Here, too, at night, are stars and mystery,
And nature sleeping ; and, all round at dawn,
The rugged utterance of mountain peaks
Against the infinite silence of the sky.

1900.

BY THE GRAVE OF KEATS

THE sunset gold was fading from the sky,
The cypresses towered darkly overhead,
While through the deepening shade a pathway led
To where the bones of England's poet lie.
We heard the night-wind in the tall trees sigh,
Yet, as we stooped and on the white stone read
Those lines which tell the heart's woe of the dead,
Something that was not darkness blurred the eye.

' Whose name was writ in water,'—yea, 'twas so.
 O passionate soul of beauty, youth and light,
 Thy name is writ in water, earth and air,
 It sings in birds' songs, scents all flowers that blow,
 Lights up the forest glade, crowns the starred
 night ;
 Thy epitaph was triumph, not despair.

1904.

THE LAURENTIANS

THESE mountains reign alone, they do not share
 The transitory life of woods and streams ;
 Wrapt in the deep solemnity of dreams,
 They drain the sunshine of the upper air.
 Beneath their peaks, the huge clouds, here and there,
 Take counsel of the wind, which all night screams
 Through grey, burnt forests where the moonlight
 beams
 On hidden lakes, and rocks worn smooth and bare.

These mountains once, throned in the primal sea,
 Shook half the world with thunder, and the sun
 Pierced not the gloom that clung about their
 crest ;
 Now with spent force, toilers from toil set free,
 Unvexed by fate, the part they played being
 done,
 They watch and wait in venerable rest.

1903.

THE CITY CHURCH

Not only in the hush of mountain lands,
And on the storms which shroud the boundless deep,
Does Nature's God His awful vigil keep.
Here, in this church, though raised by human hands,
Though in the traffic-crowded street it stands,
God's throne is set ; and while men work or sleep,
He wakes and listens to the hearts that weep,
And in His love makes straight life's tangled strands.

New generations come and pass away,
They pour their anguish into God's kind ear,
They gaze up mutely towards His unseen face ;
And, compassed with His mercies day by day,
They stand unshaken, while this earthly sphere
Rolls through the dark infinity of space.

1900.

ON THE RETURN OF OUR TROOPS

THE seal set on our nationhood are these
Strong men, returning victors from the war ;
Up to the battle's very front they bore
Our country's honour, till with every breeze
Fame sang their valour round the seven seas.
For us they braved death in the cannon's roar,
For us their comrades died, and nevermore
Will see the loved homes 'neath our maple-trees.

Throw wide thy gates, O Canada, throw wide
The portals of thy gratitude ; these men
Have roused the God in us. Now cast aside
All littleness of aim. With courage high
And loftier purpose, to thy tasks again,
And carve thine own illustrious destiny.

1900

OUT OF THE STORM

THE huge winds gather on the midnight lake,
Shaggy with rain and loud with foam-white feet,
Then bound through miles of darkness till they
meet
The harboured ships and city's squares, and wake
From steeples, domes and houses, sounds that take
A human speech, the storm's mad course to greet ;
And nightmare voices through the rain and sleet
Pass shrieking, till the town's rock-sinews shake.

Howl, winds, around us in this silent room !
Wild lake, with thunders beat thy prison bars !
A brother's life is ebbing fast away,
And, mounting on your music through the gloom,
A pure soul mingles with the morning stars,
And with them melts into the blaze of day.

ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL,
DULUTH, May 17, 1894.

WORDS

WORDS are but passing symbols of the deep
Crying unto deep in individual souls.
And men are words on the great voice that rolls
Through Nature, since that morn when from their sleep
The elements heard, and they who vigil keep
On Heaven's battlements, to distant poles
Re-echoed, 'Let light be!'—such voice as tolls
The birth and death of all who laugh or weep.

Not uniform, but in a wondrous plan,
Each diverse from his fellows, symbol each
Of varying thought in the eternal mind.
Now at the feet of every age of man
We sit and learn. Haply, in perfect speech
Its voice will be God's message to our kind.

1887.

THE POET'S EMPIRE

WHAT power can break the inner harmonies,
The rich imaginings, heard like distant sea
O'er purple meadow-lands at eve, while we
Look starwards mute? Hopes that like mountains rise
Into mid-heaven, and to entrancéd eyes
Horizon-glories of what is to be,—
All these and more lie round us infinitely,
Beyond all language fair in cloudless skies.

This is the poet's empire. Here may he
Reign king-like, throned in splendour and in
power
No power can shake, so he indeed be king.
Free as the wind, untaméd as the sea,
When earth weighs heavily, most in that hour
He cleaves the heavens in scorn on eagle wing.

1887.

IN MEMORIAM. E. S.

HER love was that full love which, like the tide,
Flows in and out life's smallest gulfs and bays,
And fills with music through long summer days
Cold hearts that else would stern and dark abide.
Her smile would cheer, her faintest look could
chide ;
No soul too outcast, none too lowly born,
For her kind ear ; and none too high for scorn
Of mean pretence, or wrong, or foolish pride.

She loved all Nature ; mountain, stream, and tree
To her were thoughts or language for the thought
She could not utter, signs of truth too high
To set to words. Her love, too, like the sea,
Flowed daily back with cares its surface brought
To that still vast beneath eternal sky.

November 21, 1886.

TRUTH

I SAW Truth on the mountains, golden-shod
With day-dawn, girt about with skies
Of azure mist, half veiling from man's eyes
Her silent face and gaze upturned to God.
Beneath were clouded steeps of shale and sod,
Tracked deviously by feet that human-wise
Toiled upward, but toiled vainly towards the prize ;
Some following, shunning some where others trod.

Yet in the darkness oft there came, ' I see,'
From eager hearts I met. ' Behold ! ' men cried,
Yet variously ; ' such are Truth's features high.'
Self's shadow, from the soul's intensity
Cast on the mist, not such the face I spied,
Calm, sovereign, silent, upturned midst the sky.

1887.

SHAKESPEARE

UNSEEN in the great minster dome of time,
Whose shafts are centuries, its spangled roof
The vaulted universe, our master sits,
And organ-voices like a far-off chime
Roll through the aisles of thought. The sunlight
flits
From arch to arch, and, as he sits aloof,
Kings, heroes, priests, in concourse vast, sublime,
Glances of love and cries from battle-field,
His wizard power breathes on the living air.

Warm faces gleam and pass, child, woman, man,
In the long multitude ; but he, concealed,
Our bard eludes us, vainly each face we scan,
It is not he ; his features are not there ;
But, being thus hid, his greatness is revealed.

1885.

AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S

I stood in that strange show, the other day,
On Baker Street, where all the famous men,
Fair dames, and murderers come to life again,
With clockwork breast and face of mimic clay,
To scare th' young. Thrice in the long display,
Blundering, I thought wax flesh, then, with
surprise

At being leceived, I turned with cautious eyes
And took for wax all those that thronged my way.

So in this aye, methinks, when, in the light
Of fuller knowledge, forms that men have reared
And wrshipped turn to dust, too hasty youths,
Shunning the whirlpool jaws of credulous sight,
Rush towards a Scylla far more to be feared,
And take for shadows all too living truths.

1885.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

'TWAS afternoon in winter, and the light
Crept softly up the walls, as day was done,
In tremulous cloud-beams, while the setting sun
Blazoned with saints the columns opposite.
All sounds had died away ; to left and right
Was silence, though I seemed to hear again
The spirit-echoes of the last Amen
Far in the groined shadowings out of sight.

Oh ! silence strange, so deep, so vast, profound ;
Ten ages slumber in the dust beneath,
And yet no voice,—no voice from those who trod
These aisles before and lie so still around.
Oh ! is it that they lose all voice in death,
Seeing what they see, and being so close to God ?

1885.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

WE stand above the abyss ; beneath our feet
Around and onward infinite darkness rolls.
The sky above is black ; the watch-bell tolls
The dying year. While slow on silent feet
Pale ghosts come towards us from the ice-locked street
Of thought's great city ; faces young and old,
Eyes sunken, features set and deathly cold,
And noiseless bear the dead year's winding-sheet.

But lo ! where now we stand is worn with tread
Of millions ; in the darkness, feel, the ground
Is dust of powdered bones ; sure, on this peak
The years have died, and millions of the dead
Have waited vainly through the gloom profound,
For dawn of day or trumpet-voice to speak.

1888.

DEATH AND THE CHILD

DEATH met a little child beside the sea ;
The child was ruddy and his face was fair,
His heart was gladdened with the keen salt air,
Full of the young waves' laughter and their glee.
Then Death stooped down and kissed him, saying :
‘ To Thee,
My child, will I give summers rare and bright,
And flowers, and morns with never noon or night,
Or clouds to darken, if thou 'lt come with me.’
Then the child gladly gave his little hand,
And walked with Death along the shining sand,
And prattled gaily, full of hope, and smiled
As a white mist curled round him on the shore
And hid the land and sea for evermore—
Death hath no terrors for a little child.

DEATH AS PRIEST

THERE lived two souls who only lived for love ;
The one a maiden, full of joy and youth,
The other her young lord, a man of truth
And very valiant. Them did God above
Knit with those holy bands none may remove
Save He that formed them. But next year there
came
God's angel, with his face and wings of flame,
And bore the young wife's soul off like a dove.
Then did her lord, disconsolate many years,
Cry bitterly to God to make them one,
And take his life, and silence the sweet past.
So Death came tenderly and stilled his tears,
Clad as a priest, and 'neath the winter's sun
In a white grave re-wedded them at last.

DEATH AND LIFE

QUOTH Death to Life : ‘ Behold what strength is mine !
All others perish, yet I do not fail ;
Where life aboundeth most, I most prevail ;
I mete out all things with my measuring line.’
Then answered Life : ‘ O boastful Death, not thine
The final triumph ; what thy hands undo
My busy anvil forgeth out anew ;
For one lamp darkened I bring two to shine.’

Then answered Death : ‘ Thy handiwork is fair,
But a slight breath will crumble it to dust.’
‘ Nay, Death,’ said Life, ‘ for in the vernal air
A sweeter blossom breaks the winter’s crust.’
Then God called down and stopped the foolish
strife ;
His servants both—God made both Death and Life.

COLUMBUS

HE caught the words which ocean thunders hurled
On heedless eastern coasts in days gone by,
And to his dreams the ever-westerling sky
The ensign of a glorious hope unfurled ;
So, onward to the line of mists which curled
Around the setting sun, with steadfast eye,
He pushed his course, and, trusting God on high,
Threw wide the portals of a larger world.

The heart that watched through those drear autumn
nights
The wide, dark sea, and man’s new empire sought,
Alone, uncheered, hath wrought a deed sublime,
Which, like a star behind the polar lights,
Will shine through splendours of man’s utmost
thought
Down golden eras to the end of time.

IDOLS

IN each man's heart a secret temple stands
For rites idolatrous of praise and prayer ;
And dusky idols through the incensed air,
On single thrones, or grouped in curious bands,
Gaze at the lamp which swings in memory's hands,—
Some richly carved, with face of beauty rare,
Some with brute heads and bosoms foul and bare,
Yet crowned with gold and gems from distant lands.

Take now thy torch, descend the winding years,
The silent stairway to thy secret shrine,
And see what Dagon crowns the topmost shelf
With front aggressive, served through hopes and fears
In ceaseless cult by love that counts divine
His every blemish,—is not Dagon SELF ?

SOLOMON

A DOUBLE line of columns, white as snow,
And vaulted with mosaics rich in flowers,
Makes square this cypress grove where fountain
showers

From golden basins cool the grass below ;
While from that archway strains of music flow,
And laughter of fair girls beguiles the hours.
But brooding, like one held by evil powers,
The great King heeds not, pacing sad and slow.

His heart hath drained earth's pleasures to the lees,
Hath quivered with life's finest ecstasies ;
Yet now some power reveals as in a glass
The soul's unrest and death's dark agony,
And down the courts the scared slaves watch him
pass
With parched lips muttering, ' All is vanity.'

THE KEY OF LIFE: A MYSTERY-PLAY

TO
EDMUND WOOD
WITH THE GRATITUDE OF A LIFE

THE KEY OF LIFE

PROLOGUE

DEAR fellow-pilgrims on life's toilsome road,
Who know this world is not man's last abode,
I pray you pause a moment on your way,
And learn the simple lessons of our play.
We have no wit to bring you, nothing rare,
In turn of speech or figure passing fair,
But simply that great message from the past,
That God's strong arms around His world are cast,
And that man's life beneath, around, above,
Is compassed with the fulness of God's love.
This little play we call *The Key of Life*,
Because in Christ there is an end of strife,
And all the problems that perplex the mind,
In Him alone, can true solution find.
When Satan spreads his snares before our feet,
Christ, who once foiled him, is a sure retreat.
When sin has spoilt life's plan and symmetry,
Christ, through His death, can give us pardon free ;
And when some grief has darkened all our sky,
Christ weeps with us for those who have to die.
There are no stars with light so far and dim,
That we can thither fly and hide from Him,
No silence in the sunless depths of sea,
But in His presence lies continually,
No hidden regions in the utmost space,
Where God and man cannot meet face to face.

With reverence then, and with a lowly fear,
 This simple tale of man's salvation hear,
 'Twill give you guidance in perplexing hours ;
 'Twill give you strength to fight the evil powers,
 If Christ be helmsman in the soul's frail bark,
 Fear not the sea however wild and dark.

SCENE I

[It is night. The starry canopy of space stretches far away into the infinite distance. Beneath it, on the shining top of one of Heaven's battlements, two angels stand, their hands clasped in the attitude of prayer, and their heads bowed in worship. A strong light falls on them from above, as an unseen angelic choir sings very softly. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory : Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High. Amen.]

As the 'Amen' dies off into silence, the Angels unclasp their hands, and draw nigh to the edge of the tower, and look down the dark abyss beneath them, where the sun and his attendant planets hang poised in space.]

FIRST ANGEL

Dear Brother, canst thou see,
 Far down the gulfs of night,
 That world to which so joyfully
 Great Gabriel speeds his flight ?
 The shining of his wing,
 Lights up the paths of space,
 And all the baby planets sing
 To see his radiant face.

SECOND ANGEL

Yea, Brother, I can see
That world and know its name,
For it, by Heaven's high decree,
Now wins a glorious fame ;
'Tis called by mortals Earth,
And there, since time began,
The Father willed, through Virgin birth,
His Son should be made man.
Great Gabriel wings his way
To a sweet maiden's shrine,
To tell her on this glorious day,—
She, wrapt in trance divine,—
That God has now decreed
She shall be favouréd,
And bear at length the Promised Seed
To bruise the serpent's head.

FIRST ANGEL

O Brother, such a theme
Sets all one's heart aglow ;
'Tis like the rapture of a dream
That God should love man so.
We know how wondrous fair
The throne of Heaven is,
The songs that thrill the golden air
In never ending bliss ;
And does the Eternal Son
In pity stoop so far
As to behold what things are done
On such a little star ?
See, Brother, now at last
Great Gabriel's feet alight
Upon that world where sin has cast
A darkness deep as night.

SECOND ANGEL

Yea, Brother, more and more,
Thine eyes with joy shall see
The love that God the Son will pour
On frail humanity ;
His brethren now they are,
For hark ! the songs of praise,
Re-echoing from star to star,
Fill all the bounds of space.
In Mary's virgin heart
A fount of rapture springs,
She wills to bear a mother's part
Unto the King of Kings.
And now the Light of Light,
From whom the worlds began,
Deigns with man's nature to unite
And be for ever man.

A weary way of life
His loving feet will tread,
And through the last most bitter strife
Go downward to the dead.
But He by death shall win
The captives held in chain,
And, from the broken bonds of sin,
Shall bring His own again.
Then up to Heaven on high
His brethren He will raise,
To dwell with Him beyond the sky
And join our hymns of praise.
Hush, Brother, veil thine eyes,
Before this awful sight.
For now through all the throbbing skies
There dawns a wondrous light.

*[The light deepens. There is silence for a space.
The Angels cover their faces with their hands
and wait with bowed heads.]*

*[Then there is heard, but faintly, as from a great
distance, the voice of the Angel Gabriel, giving
his wonderful message to Blessed Mary.]*

‘ Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee : Blessed art thou among women.

Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS.

He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David : And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.’

[Then the voice of the Holy Virgin is heard in reply :]

‘ Behold the handmaid of the Lord ;
Be it unto me according to thy word.’

[As the light fades into darkness, an unseen choir sings the song of the Blessed Mary.]

‘ My soul doth magnify the Lord : and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For He hath regarded : the lowliness of His handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth : all generations shall call me blessed.

For He that is mighty hath magnified me : and Holy is His Name.

And His mercy is on them that fear Him : throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with His arm : He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat : and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things : and the rich He hath sent empty away.

He remembering His mercy hath holpen His servant Israel : as He promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost ;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.'

SCENE II

[*It is the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. The sun has set and night is quickly coming ; but a pale yellow light still lingers on the horizon. The road winds steeply up to the little town of Bethlehem, the dark outline of the wall and tower of which looms out against the sky. Two or three lights are seen from the houses. To the left of the road stands a wayside inn built into the cliff, with an archway opening into that part of the cave which is used as a stable. There is a door to the inn, and a little window from which light issues. Laughter and singing are heard within. The night grows darker, snow begins to fall. St. Joseph enters with bundle on his back and lantern in his right hand. With his left hand he leads St. Mary. St. Joseph goes to the inn and knocks at the door. Laughter is heard within. It stops.]*

ST. JOSEPH

Goodman, goodman, open thy door,
 Pilgrims are we, cold and footsore ;
 Our way is lost in the driving snow,
 We have no otherwhere to go.

[*Laughter within. St. Joseph knocks again.*]

Goodman, goodman, open, I pray,
 Weary are we and long is the way,
 The thick night gathers, the snow comes down,
 And the hill is steep to the little town.

[*Laughter again. St. Joseph knocks once more, while St. Mary takes a seat on a stone by the door.*]

ST. JOSEPH

Goodman, goodman, open thy door,
 Pity the hearts and the feet that are sore,
 Open, I pray, and take us in,
 And evermore God's favour win.

[*The door opens and the host looks out.*]

HOST

Who are ye that come so late,
 And make such knocking at my gate ?
 What bringeth you here in the cold and snow ?
 On to the city hasten and go.

ST. JOSEPH

O goodman, we are of David's line,
 And glorious the names of our fathers shine,
 We are come to be taxed in David's town,
 But have no where to lay us down.

HOST

My house is full of the rich and great ;
No room for pilgrims of thine estate.
Go on, go on, in thy journey still,
To the little town on the top of the hill.

[*St. Joseph goes over and takes St. Mary by the hand, and they kneel at the door before the host.]*

ST. JOSEPH

O goodman, for the love of God,
Send us not back the way we trod.
This woman is so ill and weak
She scarce hath strength enough to speak.

The wind is howling far and near,
And her meek spirit quakes with fear :
Her shrinking steps and gentle moan
Certain would melt a heart of stone.

An awful sense is in the air
Of dark powers watching everywhere ;
And down the mountains as we came,
We saw wild beasts with eyes of flame.

We are not clad in silk and rings,
We are no company for kings ;
If that the inn be crowded all,
Give us then shelter in a stall.

Our gentle brothers, ox and ass,
Will let the humble pilgrims pass ;
And all night long, their breathings deep
Will soothe us in our dreamless sleep.

HOST

No time have I, in this cold night,
To hearken to your sorry plight.
Rise up and to the stable go,
There find some shelter from the snow.

[*Host turns to enter the inn. Rough servant appears.*]

Here, fellow, take these folk away,
Let them on straw their tired limbs lay.
Then quickly come, the hour is late,
Upon the others thou must wait.

[*Host enters the inn, and closes the door hurriedly. St. Joseph and St. Mary rise from their knees.*]

SERVANT

Good people, pity in my heart,
Has made the tears from my eyes start.
So weary are ye and footsore,
'Tis shame to turn you from the door.

May God, who doeth all things right,
Give you good rest and sleep to-night.
Upon sweet straw your tired limbs lay,
Until the white dawn brings the day.

[*Servant takes lantern from St. Joseph and passes into the archway, followed by St. Joseph leading St. Mary. As the darkness gradually deepens, this hymn is sung by the unseen choir.*]

HYMN TO THE INFANT JESUS

O wondrous love of God,
That men will cast away,
O wondrous love of God,
Come to my heart and stay.

Cast out all trifling things,
False loves and toys of earth ;
Enter, great King of Kings,
In me once more have birth.

O little face of love,
Against thy mother's breast,
The starry hosts above
Are resting in thy rest.

O little hands of power,
O infant's panting breath—
Eternity's at flower
And life is born of death.

O little clinging mite,
Beneath thy mother's face,
Thy dreaming eyes have sight,
Beyond the bounds of space.

So fair and white thy throne,
O little tired one sleep ;
The legions are thine own,
That guard the starlit deep.

O wondrous love of God,
Cast not my love away ;
Enter my heart, my God,
Enter my heart and stay.

SCENE III

[A plain near Bethlehem. Dark mountains are seen dimly in the distance. In the foreground is a little mound on which the shepherds are sitting, wrapped in long cloaks and with staves in their hands. The night is dark and still, as after a storm; and the stars are now twinkling merrily in the sky. At the foot of the little hill, the sheep are sleeping quietly. The shepherds look up and, extending their arms, join in singing a hymn for their flocks.]

O Lord above the starry height,
Enthroned in splendour and in might,
Look downward through the veil of night,
 And guard our sheep.
Let not the wolf nor cunning fox
 Disturb the slumber of our flocks,
And from rude rain and thunder shocks
 Them safely keep.

The night is cold,
But warm the fold,
And on the hill,
Beside its dam,
Each little lamb,
With sleep-sealed eyes,
So closely lies
All warm and still
'Neath starry skies.

Great God be near,
 Keep them from fear,
 Guard them from murrain, hurt and pain,
 And give them, all the fruitful year,
 Rich pasture in the watered plain.

*[As the hymn ceases, a bell in the distance
 is heard softly tolling midnight.]*

FIRST SHEPHERD

The storm is o'er, but black night reigns
 On sea and mountain, hills and plains.
 Now toilers on the treacherous deep
 Watch the long billows without sleep.
 Now lions in the desert prowl,
 And in the dark wood hoots the owl.
 Alas, my heart was once so glad,
 But sorrow makes it worn and sad.
 A wife, I had, whose love and care
 Filled life with music everywhere.
 But now she lies within the tomb,
 And life is nought but toil and gloom.

[He turns away, hiding his face in his hands.]

SECOND SHEPHERD

Ah Brother, sad thy grief and wild ;
 But I have lost my only child.
 No gloomy sepulchre shuts him in,
 But Satan chains him by his sin.
 His heart to me is dead and cold,
 He has no pity for the old.
 His feet go down Gehenna's way,
 No power from doom his steps can stay.

[He too turns away, hiding his face in his hands.]

THIRD SHEPHERD

I, not by private grief distressed,
Mourn that our nation is oppressed,
That foreign tyrants with us dwell
As rulers of God's Israel.

I mourn, because our foes are strong,
That right is worsted by the wrong,
That rapine, ruin, greed and lust
Have trampled Israel in the dust.

FIRST SHEPHERD

Brothers, meseems our various woe
Doth from one source of evil flow.
Let us together kneel this night,
And ask high God to send us light.

[*They kneel and pray, facing the East.*]

O Father of the land and sea,
Give us the light that is to be.

O Builder of the mountains wild,
Bring home again the erring child.

O Lord, who gave the wind his breath,
Fill with new life the house of death.

O King of Kings above the sky,
Give us some hope before we die.

Give us some Key amid our strife
That will unlock the gates of life.

[The scene grows darker. Suddenly a bright light shines in the sky, and an angel appears and sings:]

'Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.'

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you ; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'

[Then the light bursts over the whole sky, and behold, it is full of angels, singing:]

'Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.'

[When the angels are gone away from them into Heaven and the shepherds are left in darkness, they rise as if the spell of the vision were still upon them.]

FIRST SHEPHERD

Verily, a glorious sight
Hath burst upon our eyes this night.
My heart is full of hopes and fears,
That wring from it unwonted tears.

Come, let us haste and find out them
That guard this Babe in Bethlehem ;
And at His feet our homage pay,
Who comes to usher in the day.

[They pass on to Bethlehem.]

SCENE IV

Herod's Court

[A scene of barbaric splendour opens out disclosing a hall of vast proportions with rich pillars in rows on either side. Bright carpets cover the marble floor. At the back of the hall are two thrones, covered with cloth of gold. Slaves stand on either side of the thrones holding large fans of peacocks' feathers. To a slow music, a procession enters, of soldiers and pages followed by scribes, courtiers, and lastly the King and Queen. The soldiers and courtiers group themselves in a semi-circle at the back of the scene and do homage, as the King and Queen mount the thrones. Then the music ceases and the guests divide in groups conversing. Herod turns to the Queen, putting his hand to his head as though oppressed with weariness or anxiety.]

HEROD

Lady, in horror all night long,
I heard a deep voice round my bed.
Methought it was the triumph song
Borne upward from my murdered dead.
'Herod,' it cried, 'thy doom is sealed.
The vengeance of the Lord draws nigh.
Behold, in Bethlehem is revealed,
The Shiloh of the prophecy !'

QUEEN

O Sire, it were an evil thing
 To heed all mutterings of the brain.
 Were I a man, and that a king,
 I would life's cup of pleasure drain ;
 And should dire fury, like a flood,
 Burst from the angry heart of God,
 I 'd dye in God's own people's blood,
 The strokes of His avenging rod.

HEROD

Thrice-nobly spoken, wife and Queen ;
 Thy words disperse the cloud of gloom.
 For what will be, like what has been,
 Is written in the scroll of doom.

[Enter the Three Wise Men, bearing gifts.]

But who are these that come from far,
 Arrayed as pilgrims from the East ?
 Tell us, good people, what ye are,
 And wherefore come ye to the feast.

MELCHIOR

O Sire, we come from far-off lands,
 The new-born King to greet.
 We bring these presents in our hands
 To lay them at His feet.
 Long time the deep and mystic lore
 Of ancient men we read,
 Until to us the dark scrolls bore
 The wisdom of the dead.

We sought to find *The Key of Life*,
 Why man has come to be,
 What means the spirit's constant strife
 To win Eternity.
 Then as we fasted, prayed and sought,
 With tireless, sleepless eyes,
 The pitying constellations brought
 A message from the skies.

For, lo, a star, unseen before,
 Moved through the trackless night.
 We journeyed over sea and shore,
 Led onward by its light.
 And now we seek the infant King,
 The mystic Light Divine,
 Whose arm the victory will bring
 To Israel's chosen line.

HEROD [*in anger*]

What means this mummery, fellow, say ?
 Begone, thou uncouth clown,
 Or death will have thee for his prey,
 Before the sun goes down.

BALTHASAR [*advances, holding up his hand in warning*]

O Sire, beware, the sign was sure,
 No mummery this, in truth.
 The purposes of God endure,
 For God is in His youth.

[*The courtiers gather round about in interest and alarm. Herod, turning to the Scribe :]*

O Scribe, has Israel ever heard
 That such a King should come ?
 Have Israel's prophets said the word,
 Or are her sages dumb ?

[Scribe unrolls a parchment scroll and reads slowly :]

From Bethlehem, the prophets tell,
 Shall come the King of Israel.

[Herod turns to the Queen and is evidently alarmed. Consternation seizes the guests, who discuss the matter, one with another.]

[Herod stands and addresses the Three Wise Men.]

To Bethlehem haste and go ;
 And when ye find the King,
 Bear me back word, that I may so
 Prepare myself, and bring
 My costliest treasures to His feet,
 My sceptre and my crown,
 And do such homage, as is meet,
 To one from Heaven sent down.

[The Wise Men make their reverence to the King and depart. Herod leads the Queen out past the guests who do obeisance.]

HEROD

Come, Queen, be not cast down,
 I still am Israel's Lord ;

[Whispering in her ear,]

This Child shall never wear the crown,
 While Herod holds the sword.

SCENE V

The Court of Death

[Death, with the face of a skull and wearing a gold crown with sharp points, sits enthroned. He holds in one hand a scythe, in the other an hour-glass. At his feet crouch seven dusky forms in shadowy raiment, which are the Seven Deadly Sins. The scene, except where the light falls upon Death and the crouching figures, is absolutely dark. There is music of a slow dirge. It ceases, and the dark forms join in chanting, to a weird melody, the Hymn of the Seven Deadly Sins.]

King of the wind-blown mountains,
Lord of the lakes and streams,
Death, majestic and mighty,
Dream that awakes us from dreams,
Black is the frown on thy visage,
Piercing the fire of thine eye,
Thou girdest thyself with the tempest,
Thou spreadest thy wings on the sky.

Cities, and lone habitations,
Peoples, and ships of the sea,
Cringing, and prone at thy footstool,
Offer their treasures to thee.
Monarchs, in pride of dominion,
Beggars, in rags from the street,
Bow down before thee as brothers,
Naked they crouch at thy feet.

Speed us, great Death, on thine errands,
 Cover with darkness the land,
 Give us sweet sin for a poison,
 Make us a sword in thine hand.
 God and His Hosts shall be vanquished ;
 Love shall be cast from His throne ;
 Over the dark desolations,
 Thou shalt be monarch alone.

[*They rise and wave their lean, white hands
 above their heads, making, at the same time,
 a hissing sound as of serpents. Then, as
 Death rises on his throne to speak, they cry :]*

All hail, undying Death !
 Whose black lips suck man's breath,
 Whose grip is on man's heart,
 Whose sharp knife loves can part.

DEATH

Children, born of hate and gloom,
 Feeders of the hungry tomb,
 Ere the day-star bring the day,
 Speed upon your darksome way.

Nothing pity, nothing spare,
 Stab and poison everywhere,
 Snare and capture, strip and bind,
 Forge the fetters of the mind.

If ye mark temptation's hour,
 Nothing can withstand your power ;
 When the soul begins to slip,
 Get it quickly in your grip.

When a soul has fallen in sin,
 Pour a deeper poison in.
 Tell it, God withholds His care ;
 Blast it with a dumb despair.

Scar and scratch the face of right,
 Blind the eyes that look for light,
 Shackle truth, set lying free,
 So shall all things come to me.

[*He holds up his right hand, and Pride comes and kneels before him. Death, holding his hand above him in blessing, says :]*

Pride, go forth to crush in doom
 Hearts wherein God has no room.

[*Pride retires, and Covetousness kneels before Death.*]

DEATH

Love of Gold, go forth to slay
 Souls who God's love cast away.

[*Covetousness retires, and Lust kneels before Death.*]

DEATH

Lust, go forth to poison love,
 Blind men's eyes to things above.

[*Envy comes.*]

DEATH

Envy, prick men like a thorn,
 Make them curse that they were born.

[*Gluttony comes.*]

DEATH

Gluttony, be thou a mesh,
Snaring all the grosser flesh.

[*Anger comes.*]

DEATH

Anger, go forth like a flood,
Drown the world in pain and blood.

[*Sloth comes.*]

DEATH

Sloth, be thou a clogging slime,
Make men lose salvation's time.

[*Then Death extends his wide, black wings, and chants exultingly :*]

Now shall my dominions
Be the captive world.

Now my outstretched pinions,
Like a flag unfurled,
Mock in exultation
God upon His throne ;
And of all creation
I am lord alone.

[*Suddenly, a trumpet gives three loud sharp blasts, and, in a burst of light, an Angel appears holding a drawn sword over Death, who, at sight of the Angel, crouches down, grovelling on the ground, with the Seven Deadly Sins prostrate around him.*]

ANGEL

'Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace,
goodwill towards men.'

Vain Death, depart, thy reign is o'er.
God's Son is Man for evermore.
Through Him, temptation makes more strong
The soul that battles with the wrong.
When sheltered 'neath His loving wing,
All pain and sorrow lose their sting.
His slave art thou, to sit and wait
And ope for souls the heavenly gate.
Behold, the clouds have rolled away
And on the mountains dawns the day.

[*Death and the Seven Deadly Sins crawl off
on their hands and knees, like animals.*]

ANGEL [*uplifting his sword*]

Our God is Victor in the strife.
Behold for man the Key of Life.

[*Instantly a light falls round about and in it
stands revealed the scene of the Nativity.
From a manger at the back, rays of glory
emerge. Behind the manger, stand two
lighted candles. St. Mary and St. Joseph,
the Shepherds and Wise Men kneel in front,
while a row of adoring angels forms a back-
ground to the scene. Melchior, who kneels
in the centre facing the manger, swings a
censer of sweet incense. As they kneel, they
all join in singing softly :]*

O Word of God Incarnate,
 O Light begot of Light,
 To weakness comes all power,
 To finite infinite.
 We hail Thee, tender Saviour,
 We hail Thee, mighty King ;
 All that we have, we bring Thee,
 As love's own offering.
 O, born of Virgin Mother,
 Sweet Jesu, Prince of Peace,
 Give us the strength to conquer,
 Give us from sin release.
 The thick night hovers o'er us,
 Our foes advance for strife,
 To us, O Key of David,
 Throw wide the gates of life.

Amen.

[As the last ‘Amen’ is sung, darkness falls upon the scene, and the choir sings the Song of the aged Simeon, which he sang when he took the Lord’s Christ into his arms in the temple.]

‘Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace : according to Thy word.
 For mine eyes have seen : Thy Salvation,
 Which Thou hast prepared : before the face of all people ;
 To be a light to lighten the Gentiles : and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost ;
 As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.’

EPILOGUE

Good people, now our simple play is ended.

In halting lines the story has been told,
How great Jehovah hath our race befriended
And loved us with a love that was of old.

Go home, then, filled with deeper love and pity
For sinful souls, for all the sick and sad :
And, as about the streets of this fair city
Ye go each day, make others bright and glad.

Think not that they who knelt before the manger
Were nearer God than ye can be to-day—
That, had ye worshipped then the little Stranger,
No tempter's wiles could lure your heart away.

For, every age hath its own special vision.
At every door, the Crucified has stood.
To every soul, there comes the fierce decision—
The final choice of evil or of good.

And, day by day, unchanging through the ages,
Though ears are deaf and eyes are blind with mist,
He, who was worshipped by the Eastern Sages,
Is throned amongst us in the Eucharist.

Yea, that dear Christ, born of the spotless Maiden,
In yearning love still cries to souls distressed—
' All ye that labour and are heavy laden,
Come unto Me and I will give you rest.'

FINIS

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